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## T-Hub in collaboration with Israel launches tech initiative DRISHTI

Hyderabad: T-Hub, India's leading startup incubator, in partnership with the Directorate of Defence Research & Development (DDR&D), Israel Ministry of Defence, enabled by Motwani Jadeja Foundation (MJF), has launched the DRISHTI (Dual-use Robust India-Israel High-Tech Innovation) program.

This transformative initiative aims to strengthen ties between India and Israel, driving innovation, strategic partnerships, and cutting-edge technological advancements across critical sectors such as defense, artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), robotics, drones, and more, a press release said.

## Heavy rains cause disruptions in Tirumala and Tirupati

Tirumala and Tirupati have been severely affected by heavy rainfall, leading to difficulties for devotees and residents. The sudden downpour has resulted in a significant drop in temperature, causing increased discomfort for many. Officials have advised motorists to exercise caution while navigating the Ghat roads leading to Tirumala, as there is an elevated risk of landslides due to the wet conditions. In response to the hazards, staff have been placed on high alert. Furthermore, routes leading to crucial sites such as Papavasanam and Srivari Pada have been temporarily closed for safety reasons. Local water bodies like Gogarbham and Papavasanam have reached full capacity and are overflowing, intensifying the concerns in the region.

## Union Cabinet clears 'One Nation, One Election' Bill



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill, aimed at improving electoral processes. The Bill is likely to be tabled in this Winter Session of Parliament. According to the Centre this legislation will not only streamline the electoral process, but will also foster greater efficiency, and reduce the financial and administrative burden associated with conducting multiple elections at different times. The Centre has stressed that the concept of 'One Nation, One Election' envisions to synchronise the electoral cycles of the Lok Sabha and state Legislative Assemblies, allowing voters to cast their ballots for both polls simultaneously.

By doing so, the government aims to address sev-

eral challenges posed by the current system of staggered elections, which often lead to prolonged periods of electioneering, disruption in governance, and heightened expenditure. Earlier in September, the Union Cabinet had approved the proposal for the 'One Nation, One Election' Bill. Congress leader Tariq Anwar, while speaking to IANS, said, "This is a controversial issue. Ours is a federal structure in which it is not possible to implement 'One Nation, One Election'. The Opposition has not been taken into confidence on the issue. All stakeholders must be taken into confidence before taking such a big decision." Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had hailed the proposal, saying that the Cabinet has accepted the recommendations of the High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections. The High-Level Committee on Simultaneous Elections headed by former President Ram Nath Kovind had recommended holding concurrent elections for the Lok Sabha and state Assemblies followed by synchronised local body polls within 100 days. However, critics have argued that implementing synchronised elections could pose logistical and constitutional challenges. They highlight potential difficulties in dissolving Assemblies mid-way or addressing situations where a state government falls before completing its tenure. Proponents of the Bill on the other hand argue that it will usher in a new era of stability and continuity in policymaking, as governments will no longer have to operate in a perpetual election mode.

## This X user predicted Assad's fall, Bangladesh turmoil and even Adani's crisis a year in advance



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Hyderabad: His bio on social media platform 'X' says he talks 'about issues long before they happen'. For those who took the bio as some sort of self praise or even troll, one look at his timeline should be an eye-opener. Aravind, who has about 50,000 followers on X, has made predictions that have hit the bull's eye with uncanny precision, be it the fall of Bashar Al-Assad in Syria, that of Sheikh Hasina in Bangladesh, and closer home, the crisis that Gautam Adani is in. His posts have warned of a mostly US-run deep state, sometimes by China, being behind most of the above mentioned developments. Soon after Assad's fall, Aravind finally posted his multiple predictions from last year in a single post on December 8. The same predictions are now going viral on social media, with some likening his predictions to that of 16th century seer Nostradamus.

"Please excuse me for this 'I told you so' post but humbly request you to read it. I tweeted about the overthrow of the Assad regime and a blow to Russia in Syria 1-year before it happened," he posted on December 8. The

post on Assad's fall was in response to a post by journalist Shiv Aroor in October 2023, where Aravind said that Bashar Al-Assad and his government in Syria would be history by the end of next year (2024), which would be another blow to Russia. So the US, West, and Israel will get that done as well in this war, he had said about the happenings in Gaza at that time.

"And it happened now at the end of 2024 exactly. Similarly predicted the Bangladesh coup, including persecution of Hindus and the creation of another Pakistan at India's border a year ago," he said in his recent post, attaching that tweet: "Also warned Adani about Bangladesh too a year ago and to be careful about large investments: When I post, I always feel like this is quite obvious, countries and companies will know. In fact, I think everyone will see these just like me. As they seem simple enough to be seen. But when things happen, I get a feeling that even nation states seem caught by surprise," he said. "Countries like Syria, Russia, and India with all their experts and intelligence do not see these coming and seem to be taken off-guard. And I see large companies with huge investments unprepared. My hunch is they are all not able to correctly understand the, mostly US run, deep state (sometimes China influenced) and its goals. Their mental model about the DS, its influencers, and their ambitions may need a bit of fine-tuning. Actually, only this year the deep state has even been acknowledged by many at higher levels and is being openly talked about without fearing being called a conspiracy theorist. Even leaders are talking about it. That's good. Recognizing the DS is the first step. I used to be called a lunatic for talking about the DS before. But understanding the DS is even more important. Its players, influencers, their goals, the strategies they use to achieve the goals, and the time frames are crucial to know," he said.

## History made as Gukesh becomes youngest-ever world champion after last-ditch blunder from Ding Liren

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

There is a now-viral video of Gukesh as an 11-year-old. In it, the boy who is yet to become a grandmaster is asked by IM Sagar Shah of ChessBase India what his ambition is. "I want to become the youngest chess champion in the world," declares the boy in his thin boyish voice with the hint of a grin on a face that is yet to have even the shadow of a moustache. About seven years after that proclamation, Gukesh became the youngest chess champion in the world, defeating Ding Liren in a battle of wits that lasted three weeks and tested both players psychologically and physically. There has been a purpose to the way that Gukesh has handled things in Singapore. It starts from the way he enters the playing hall, striding past shouting fans. Then, in the way he sits at the chessboard, shutting his eyes to enter an almost-meditative state while his opponent Ding Liren tries to find the best moves. During games, Ding often sneaks glances at his young opponent, as if seeking approval from him or trying to interpret emotions off Gukesh's face to figure if the move he's made on the board is a good one. But Gukesh has been inscrutable. A locked vault of emotions. Unlike most people from his generation, he has managed to spend almost three weeks in Singapore with bare minimum social media and internet usage. He's chasing history after all. And in quests like these, there can be no distractions. As his youth coach, grandmaster Vishnu Prasanna, loves to point out, this is what Gukesh's life has been since he was a kid. Everything he does is in service to that one goal: becoming a world champion.

"Somehow he was always much more serious about chess than others in his age group even at age of 11," Vishnu had told The Indian Express once. "I felt even then that this guy really wants to be something. He was very driven right from the start. He had a high level of desire. He would think about nothing else. Just focussed on one goal. It's a certain obsession. Of all the kids I have worked with, nobody has shown what he has shown: an obsession about the game and to be No 1." In Gukesh, we have a player who calculates like his mind is powered by a chip and takes risks like he has the Goddess of chess, Caissa, whispering moves



in his ear. He found himself a full point down in the first game of the world championship itself. Deflating for sure. But not when you come prepared for every single outcome. As mind guru Paddy Upton told The Indian Express, "Gukesh had memorised the entire book on playing in a world championship, right down to the minutest detail, before he went to Singapore." He also suffered another setback when he lost immediately after taking the lead in game 11. His response? To be the first one into the playing arena for a change in game 13. As he later said: "I was ready for a fight." That's been his constant state of mind for the past three weeks.

Playing no-holds-barred chess on the board in Singapore, he frequently overestimated his position, perhaps a reflection of his opponent's state of mind. Maybe the heady optimism of youth. Twice, he declined draws even when his opponent had the upper hand. He has been aided in part by his opponent Ding Liren, the man who uneasily wears the crown on his head. The Chinese grandmaster seems to have lacked the appetite to push for a win and has been guilty of settling for draws in games 2, 4, 5 and 6 after having an upper hand. What should be scary for the rest of the world is that even chess royalty, who are the best readers of other players, are unable to gauge what the 18-year-old's ceiling is. Susan Polgar had predicted many years back that Gukesh from the current Indian crop of prodigies which includes Arjun Erigaisi and Praggnanandhaa would go the furthest.

## Widespread rains wreak havoc in Tamil Nadu, schools closed in many districts



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Chennai: Widespread rains lashed parts of Tamil Nadu on Thursday, prompting authorities to declare a holiday for schools in Chennai and many other districts. Overnight rains lashed Chennai and the neighbouring Tiruvallur, Chengelpet and Kancheepuram, besides Villupuram and some areas in the Cauvery delta region. Following sharp showers, authorities declared a day's holiday for schools in districts, including Chennai, Tiruvallur, Chengelpet, Kancheepuram, Villupuram, Ramanathapuram, Thanjavur, Mayiladuthurai and Cuddalore. The regional weather office has forecast more spells of rain in Chennai, Tiruvallur, Chengelpet and Kancheepuram, Villupuram, Kallakurichi, Tiruvarur,

Thanjavur districts in the state, besides the neighbouring union territory Puducherry.

## Seven naxals killed in an encounter in Chhattisgarh

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Kothagudem: Seven naxals were killed in an encounter between the CPI (Maoist) cadres and security forces in south Abujahmad of Bastar area in Chhattisgarh State on Thursday. A joint party of special task force (STF) and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) along with District Reserve Guard (DRG) of Narayanpur, Dantewada, Jagdalpur, Kondagaon districts went to the Abujahmad area in anti-naxal search operation. Exchange of fire between naxalites and the security forces took place intermittently from 3 am onwards. After the firing was ceased the security personnel recovered bodies of seven uniformed naxalites until afternoon hours. The encounter and search operation are going on and casualties on the naxal side are expected to increase.

## Veteran actor Mohan Babu booked for attempt to murder

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Police have booked an attempt to murder case against veteran Tollywood actor Mohan Babu for attacking a television journalist at his residence recently. Rachakonda Police, which earlier registered a case under Bharat Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) Section 118 (1) (causing hurt with dangerous weapons or substances), has added Section 109 (attempt to murder). Police said that after taking the legal opinion they added Section 109 to the First Information Report (FIR) registered at Pahadi Shareef Police Station. The FIR was registered on a complaint by M. Satyanarayana, a reporter of Telangana news channel TV9. Mohan Babu attacked the TV reporter when the latter had gone to his residence in Jalpally to cover the ongoing dispute between him and his actor son Manchu Manoj.

Journalists had staged protests on Wednesday, demanding the police book an attempt to murder case. They had also demanded an apology from Mohan Babu, who is also a former Member of Parliament. Meanwhile, Mohan Babu remained in hospital. He was admitted on Tuesday night with high blood pressure and anxiety. He could not appear before Rachakonda Police Commissioner, who had served notices to him and his two sons. The senior actor approached Telangana High Court, which exempted him from appearance till December 24. Mohan Babu's elder son and actor Manchu Vishnu on Wednesday termed the Tuesday night attack on the journalist unfortunate. He claimed that the act was not deliberate. He said that their father came before the media by doing 'namskar' but when a mike was put close to his mouth, he attacked on an impulse. He assured all help to the family of the injured journalist.



Manchu Manoj, who is locked in a bitter fight with his father, said that he was apologising to the media on behalf of his father. He said the media persons came under attack while supporting him. The injured reporter stated in his complaint that when Manchu Manoj and other journalists went into the house on the invitation of Manchu Manoj, Mohan Babu confronted them aggressively, used abusive and foul language, grabbed the mike and attacked him with the mike. This resulted in severe head injury. The incident occurred when Manchu Manoj broke the gate to enter the house after an argument with the bouncers deployed there. Along with Manoj and his private security men, some journalists also entered the house. When the TV 9 reporter asked a question to Mohan Babu about the dispute with his son, he got enraged, grabbed the mike and attacked the reporter with the mike. The journalist collapsed on the ground. The bouncers drove all the journalists out of the house. The injured reporter was admitted to a hospital in Shamshabad.

## KTR Accuses Government of Brutality Against Farmers, Calls for Immediate Action



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Hyderabad: BRS (Bharat Rashtra Samithi) Chairperson K.T. Rama Rao (KTR) has sharply criticized the state government for its harsh treatment of farmers involved in the Laghacherla protest, accusing it of using extreme measures against them and their families. His comments come a month after the farmers' protests, which had attracted significant attention. Addressing the media, KTR condemned the government's response, likening it to the behavior of "kings and emperors" instead of addressing the legitimate concerns of the farmers. "The farmers of Laghacherla spoke out a month ago, and they made sure their voices were heard," KTR stated. He also responded to claims that violence had been directed toward officials, quoting the district collector, who confirmed that there were no such incidents. However, KTR pointed

out that the government had arrested not only the farmers but also political leader Patnam Narendra Reddy, who had supported them. "The farmers were subjected to third-degree methods, and for the past month, about 40 farmers have been in jail," KTR added. KTR also expressed grave concern about the health of the imprisoned farmers, revealing that one of them had experienced chest pains while in jail. "The government is trying to keep this information under wraps, and even the farmer's family was not notified about his condition," KTR said. He further criticized the government's actions, calling it "cruel" to handcuff a sick individual and transport them to a hospital under such circumstances.

## AP Home Minister Anitha alerts officials amid rains in heavy Rains in Tirupati

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

In response to heavy rainfall resulting from a low-pressure system in the Bay of Bengal, Home Minister Vangalapati Anitha has urged local authorities and residents of Tirumala and Sullurpet areas to remain vigilant. The minister emphasized the need for caution among motorists, particularly devotees traveling on ghat roads, advising careful driving conditions due to adverse weather.



# Indian Chronicle

English Daily

## New RBI Guv

REVENUE Secretary Sanjay Malhotra's surprise appointment as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor comes amid worries over a decline in economic growth, a weaker currency and an uptick in inflation. As he embarks on his three-year term, Malhotra has huge expectations to deliver, particularly concerning the monetary policy. Despite the several high points during his six years in office, the second longest for any chief of the central bank, Shaktikanta Das ends his tenure on a sombre note. His parting message about restoring inflation-growth balance being the most important task ahead is acknowledgement of the unfinished agenda. Political overtones have been dominating the clamour for a cut in interest rates, with both the Finance Minister and Commerce Minister flagging high bank interest rates as a growth hamper.

Das leaves behind a legacy marked by steady policymaking and deft crisis management. He steered the economy through the Covid pandemic which prevented any economic activity for well over a year, and also oversaw its recovery, especially in the financial sector. Another achievement was to mend the difficult relationship between North Block and Mint Street that he had inherited from Ujit Patel. The generous out-of-record dividend to the Centre remains a contentious issue, raising concerns about weakening of the RBI's financial strength and independence. While strengthening the banking system, Das prevented a build-up of risk, asking lenders to avoid all forms of exuberance. The Governor-headed Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent for the 11th consecutive time last week. It signalled the RBI's cautious approach amid inflation and slowing growth. A review of the rate cut is likely by the Malhotra-headed MPC in its February meeting. It will be a tough call.

## AAP MLA Naresh Balyan arrested under MCOCA: Why a Maharashtra Act is applicable in Delhi



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Last week, Aam Aadmi Party MLA Naresh Balyan was arrested on charges under the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) and sent to police custody for 10 days. Police said his name had cropped up as an alleged facilitator to settle an extortion demand made by gangster Kapil Sangwan to a businessman. The stringent Act was also slapped against the gangster, who is purportedly operating from the UK, this year for extortion.

What is the Act and why is it applicable in Delhi?

Enacted in Maharashtra in 1999 by the coalition government of Shiv Sena and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the MCOCA was the first state legislation to address organised crime in India. The rise of the underworld and organised crime in Mumbai were the driving forces behind the creation of this law. Following this, many state legislatures enacted laws similar to MCOCA. Many of these, however, didn't see the light of day as they failed to get presidential assent. In the National Capital Territory of Delhi, where law and order is under the Union Government, MCOCA was adopted in 2002.

What laws do other states use?

Gujarat and Karnataka have similar acts that penalise organised crime in their states – the Gujarat Control of Terrorism and Organised Crime (GCTOC) Act, and the Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act (KCOCA). Haryana, in 2023, passed the Haryana Control of Organised Crime Bill, 2023. Similarly, Rajasthan also introduced a bill called the Rajasthan Control of Organised Crime Bill, 2023. Uttar Pradesh has its own act to control organised crime called the Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986.

What are the provisions under MCOCA?

## Delhi govt extends Business Blasters scheme to colleges, offers Rs 50,000 seed funding to students

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

The Delhi government on Tuesday launched the senior version of its flagship Business Blasters programme, expanding the initiative from school students to college and state-funded university students. The programme, which started as a pilot in government schools in 2021, aims to promote entrepreneurship by providing participants with seed funding and a platform to implement their business ideas. Speaking at the launch event held at Indraprastha Institute of Information Technology, Chief Minister Atishi said, "The Business Blasters programme has shattered stereotypes about government school students and demonstrated their ability to become confident risk-takers." The school-level initiative, which provided Rs 2,000 in seed funding to students in classes 11 and 12, has now evolved to offer Rs 50,000 in seed capital for college students. "We will provide Rs 50,000 seed money for college students who participate in this programme... We wish to see many of you on the front pages of newspapers as successful entrepreneurs who have started successful companies through the experience they gain from this programme," said Atishi.

Atishi highlighted the success of the scheme in schools where some participants have gone on to register private limited companies. "We hope to see many of you on the front pages of newspapers and business magazines as successful entrepreneurs," she added. "Why business blasters in colleges? The dream started when we looked at the biggest, well-earning companies in the world with cutting-edge products, many of them, across the world, have Indians filled in the tech world... Not only in tech, but in companies like Chanel, a perfume company, too, is headed by an Indian woman, Leena Nair," she added. "Education and entrepreneurship are the biggest tools for women's empowerment," Atishi emphasised.

## Panchamasali reservation protest turns violent in Karnataka's Belagavi; several injured in clash with police



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

A protest by the Panchamasali community demanding reservation under the 2A category turned violent in Karnataka's Belagavi on Tuesday as protesters jumped over barricades and tried to barge into the Suvarna Vidhana Soudha where the winter session of the legislature is being held. The police re-

sorted to mild caning, resulting in injuries to more than 10 people. Community seer Jayamruthyunjaya Swami and BJP legislators Basangouda Patil Yatnal and Arvind Bellad, who were part of the protest, were detained by the police. Stones were also pelted at the police personnel, exacerbating the situation. Traffic movement along the Pune-Bengaluru national highway in front of the administrative complex

was also disrupted. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that though the government had invited protesters for talks, they did not arrive for the same. "We are not opposed to protests as democracy allows for the same," he said. The protest was announced by Jayamruthyunjaya Swami despite opposition from a section of community leaders. Though the seer had said that they would lay

siege to the Soudha with more than 5,000 tractors, the Belagavi district administration had denied permission for the same while allowing the group to hold a protest near the complex.

In a post on X, H D Kumaraswamy, Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel, accused the state government of resorting to the "Adolf Hitler route" to curb protests. The Panchamasali seer was treated in a disgraceful manner, he said, adding that the government would be held responsible if it tried to disrupt peace. "The government should apologise to the seer and the community while taking measures to fulfil their demands," Kumaraswamy said. Panchamasalis are a sub-sect of the dominant Lingayat community and have been demanding reservation under the 2A category for the past three years.

## Man held in Gurgaon for throwing banned 'sutli bombs' outside night club



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Gurgaon sutli bomb Gurgaon Police Commissioner Vikas Arora inspected the site and directed the bomb disposal team to defuse two live sutli bombs recovered from the suspect. A man was arrested in Gurgaon's Sector 29 early on Tuesday after he was allegedly caught throwing banned 'sutli bombs', the police said. Two live 'sutli bombs' and a country-made weapon were seized from the accused.

A 'sutli bomb' is a firecracker made of green jute twine wrapped around an explosive component. The gunpowder inside it produces gases when heated, which then tears through the twine and creates a powerful sound. According to officials, two sutli bombs were thrown outside Human Night Club around 5.15 am on Tuesday. "The Gurgaon Police's Crime Branch and SWAT teams, on routine duty in the area, apprehended the suspect along with the bombs and weapon. The apprehended individual has been identified as Sachin, a resident of Meerut district in Uttar Pradesh," said an officer. "Sutli bomb predates the current green crackers. It is banned," the officer said. Gurgaon Police Commissioner Vikas Arora inspected the site and directed the bomb disposal team to defuse two live sutli bombs recovered from the suspect. While a scooter and a signboard sustained minor damage in the incident, no other harm was reported to life or property, the police said.

Initial investigation reveals that the suspect was allegedly inebriated at the time of the incident. "He was either drunk or under the influence of drugs. He had already thrown two 'bombs' and was preparing to throw two more when Gurgaon police apprehended him. No one was harmed. We are interrogating him to check the motive and if he is related to any crime syndicate," the officer added. Varun Suhag, the manager of Human Night Club in front of which the incident took place, said the accused was on the road and had not gone inside. "The club is open till 6 am and the incident took place half an hour before we were closing. Police visited the club and collected CCTV footage," said Suhag.

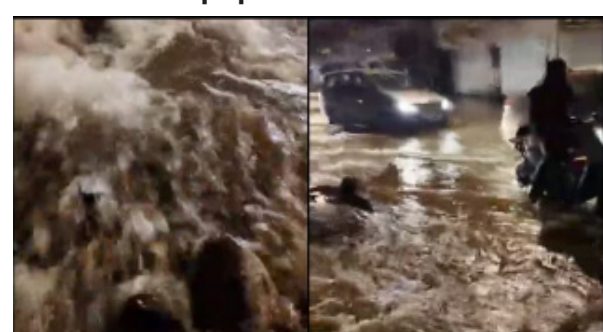
## Kashmiri vendor called 'Bangladeshi and manhandled' at Haryana crafts fair

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

A Kashmiri vendor was allegedly manhandled at the International Gita Festival in Haryana's Kurukshetra last week by a mob carrying saffron flags. Members of the mob allegedly called him a Bangladeshi and publicly called for boycotting Muslim vendors at the fair.

The police have booked a case in connection with the December 7 incident on a complaint lodged by the vendor, Yunus Khan. He is among 26 vendors from Srinagar and nearby areas who participate in the ongoing crafts fair organised on the periphery of Brahma Sarovar. Khan told the police that he had been participating in the fair for many years but had faced such an experience never before. Out of the nearly 600 stalls, about 50 are set up by Muslim vendors who have come from different parts of the country. In his complaint, Khan said, "On Saturday, a group of 30-40 persons came to my stall and started shouting slogans. They accused me of being a Bangladeshi. They used a public address system and shouted slogans asking people not to buy any article from Muslims' shops. They thrashed me with sticks that they were carrying and vandalised my shop." The police said the case was registered on Tuesday on charges including rioting and criminal intimidation. "The FIR has been registered and the investigation is going on. CCTV footage from the spot is being examined to identify the miscreants," Station House Officer Dinesh Singh told reporters.

## Water supply in Mumbai's Bandra, Khar disrupted due to pipeline burst



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Water supply to several areas of Bandra and Khar in Mumbai's western suburbs was affected on Tuesday after a major pipeline burst was reported at Swami Vivekananda Road, near Lucky Junction. According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), the leakage was reported around 2 am on Monday and the repair works were underway. A video that trended on social media showed water gushing out from one of the inlets of the pipe which led to portions of the S V Road getting partially submerged. In a statement, the BMC said that out of the two water channels that supply water to Bandra, a 600-mm main water channel leaked.

"At present, repair works are underway and water supply will remain shut in some areas until the repair works are completed. In some areas, water is being supplied, but with low pressure. Citizens are requested to use water sparingly," said a civic official.

## Bombay High Court grants bail to 14 accused in Mira Road communal clashes



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

The Bombay High Court Monday granted bail to 14 men arrested for their alleged involvement in the communal clashes in the Naya Nagar area of Mira Road in Maharashtra's Thane district in January this year, saying their "further detention as under-trial prisoners appears tenuous." As per the complaint registered by a man, Vinod Jaiswal, he and his family members and associates attended a devotional event on the eve of Ram Temple's consecration and went for a drive in three to four cars and 10 to 15 two-wheelers. Jaiswal said when the convoy proceeded towards Lodha Road, a Muslim boy allegedly accosted him. As per the complaint, the boy asked Jaiswal to wait and, thereafter, a mob armed with rods, sticks, knives etc surrounded the convoy, allegedly started shouting slogans and attacking vehicles, abusing and assaulting Jaiswal and his associates.

A single-judge bench of Justice N J Jamadar observed that prima facie, premeditation or a prior meeting of mind to attack the members of the convoy cannot be inferred on the part of applicants, "as the very entry of the informant party into the said locality was a matter of chance". "Prima facie, it does not appear that CCTV cameras had captured any of the applicants assaulting Jaiswal using a knife, as alleged, or for that matter, any of the injured witnesses," said Justice Jamadar. Justice Jamadar also added that there was no material to indicate that one of the applicants was a member of the unlawful assembly, yet he was arrested for the crime on September 29, despite having any connection with the incident. "In the case at hand, the alleged rioting was committed by more than 50 to 60 persons. Where the guilt of the accused would hinge upon their identity as the members of the unlawful assembly, who shared the common object to commit the alleged offences, their further detention as under-trial prisoners appears tenuous," Justice Jamadar noted. Justice Jamadar added that "investigation in the matter was complete for all intent and purpose" and "applicants appeared to have roots in the society to tie them down to their place of abode and avocation." Therefore, the judge said, the possibilities of them fleeing away from justice, tampering with evidence and threatening witnesses appeared "remote". Justice Jamadar said the applicants have been in custody since January and considering the nature of the incident, the number of accused and witnesses, and the nature of evidence the prosecution may require to produce, "it appears extremely unlikely that the trial can be concluded within a reasonable period". "The further detention of the applicants as under-trial prisoners thus appears unwarranted. I am, therefore, inclined to exercise the discretion in favour of the applicants," the judge noted while granting bail to the applicants. Justice Jamadar held. The bench asked the applicants to furnish personal bond of Rs 30,000 each along with sureties of the same amount and to report to the Naya Nagar Police Station once every alternate month for three years or till the conclusion of the trial, whichever is earlier.

## No Bathukamma on Telangana Thalli statue is conspiracy, says Desapathi

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Siddipet: BRS leaders and cadre performed 'palabhishekham' to portraits of the original Telangana Thalli statue across the erstwhile Medak district on Tuesday, opposing the government's move to install a new statue on the Secretariat premises.



## As Centre withholds RDF, Punjab plans to let out land of mandis for petrol pumps, mobile towers to generate funds



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

With the Centre withholding Rural Development Fund (RDF) to the tune of Rs 8,000 crore, the cash-crunched Punjab government is planning to let out the land of mandis (agricultural markets) across the state and generate revenue on its own. The RDF is the 3 per cent cess levied on the purchase or sale of agricultural produce under the Rural Development Fund Act, 1987. Punjab procures wheat and paddy worth Rs 60,000 crore annually for the Centre. Till April 2024, Rs 6,767 crore was pending with the Centre. After procuring paddy recently, another Rs 13,000 crore has been added to the amount.

The BJP-led Centre has been withholding the RDF for the last three years, and the Punjab government moved the Supreme Court against this in July 2023. Recently, Punjab Finance Minister Harpal Cheema and Food and Civil Supplies Minister Lal Chand Katarachak met Union Food and Public Distribution Minister Pralhad Joshi and sought interim relief. However, the meeting has not yielded anything yet. Talking to The Indian Express, a government functionary said, "We have huge plinths of mandis across the state. We plan to let out parts of these plinths for ATM kiosks, petrol pumps, mobile towers, restaurants and even mini

shopping arcades. It can generate funds. We are working on this proposal."

He added, "We plan to make between Rs 100-200 crore by letting out pieces of land in mandis. Petrol pumps and shopping arcades will be viable in mandis on highways. Mobile towers can be put up even in the mandis in the villages as these companies are always looking for land. Similar is the case with ATM kiosks. The banks are also always looking for space for kiosks. Our mandis are always well linked with the road network." The Punjab government uses the RDF to maintain roads and mandis. The government needs infrastructure to carry out two massive procurement operations worth over Rs 60,000 crore annually. The state had invested hundreds of crores of rupees in setting up mandis and connecting these with link roads. The state has over 1,700 mandis and a rural road network of 36,000 km that have not been repaired ever since the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government took over in 2022. "If we can generate money on our own, it can go into repairing these roads and maintaining the infrastructure. It is about thinking out of the box. When we have land, we should make use of it," said the functionary. The deadlock over the non-payment of the RDF has been persisting. The Centre wants the state to impose a levy of only 2 per cent, following the example of Haryana, instead of the current 3 per cent. However, the state has not agreed to this, arguing that the RDF is a statutory fund and that it has the right to set the levy. "We have approached the Supreme Court regarding this issue. However, the matters concerning interstate relations and Centre-state disputes remain unresolved in court and continue to be delayed. We are now attempting to address these issues through dialogue. The situation is uncertain because Haryana is willingly accepting a 2 per cent levy, but the BJP governs it. The Centre may support Haryana by providing other grants. In contrast, Punjab is ruled by rival parties of the BJP, which seems to contribute to the ongoing problems for the state," the functionary said.

## 'I was thrown out of the autorickshaw': Shoppers, wedding attendees among those injured in Mumbai BEST bus accident

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Those who witnessed the bus accident near Mumbai's Kurla railway station on Monday night, which left seven dead, shared that the bus was speeding in a narrow lane full of street vendors and pedestrians. The electric BEST bus reportedly lost control and rammed into dozens of vehicles and several pedestrians over a stretch of 100 metres before hitting a pillar and coming to a stop. Basheera Shaikh, who sustained minor injuries in the accident, says, "I was in a shared autorickshaw along with three others, including the driver. Suddenly, the bus hit our auto from behind. Since I was sitting at the edge, I was thrown out but the autorickshaw got destroyed completely."

Witnesses said the bus driver attempted to flee but passersby caught him and handed him to the police. Nearly 49 people were injured in the accident. Several cars and autorickshaws were also damaged before the bus finally stopped after hitting a pillar of Solomon Residency after breaking through its compound wall. Mohammed Sajid was attending a wedding in the area along with his friends and family. "Four of us were just walking on the roadside and the bus hit us from behind. We were thrown in different directions and only met at the hospital," he says. Among those who were with Sajid, one person's condition is critical, while another has minor injuries and one escaped unhurt. According to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), those injured in the accident were admitted to various hospitals across the city.



Rehmunissa, another resident of Kurla, was at the market with her parents and daughter. All four were mowed down by the bus. "We were just casually shopping just like any other day. We saw one bus coming and waited for it to go and then this bus came at high speed and it all happened," she says. While Rehmunissa sustained minor injuries, her family members are in the hospital with severe injuries. The accident occurred around 9.50 pm opposite Anjuman-e-Islam School on S G Barve Marg in Kurla (West) when the electric BEST bus was operating on route number 332 from Kurla Station West to LBS Road. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis on Tuesday announced an aid of Rs 5 lakh for the families of those killed in the accident and directed the Mumbai Municipal Corporation and BEST to bear the treatment expenses of those injured.

## 'Statesman and visionary who turned Bengaluru into Silicon Valley of India': Karnataka legislators pay tributes to S M Krishna

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Several Karnataka legislators recalled their association with former chief minister and external affairs minister S M Krishna, who passed away on Tuesday, and hailed his contribution to the state's development during a condolence motion in both Houses of the legislature. Speaking at the Legislative Assembly, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said he along with his supporters such as Social Welfare Minister H C Mahadevappa and Public Works Department minister Satish Jarkiholi was advised by Krishna to join the Congress after his expulsion from the JD(S). "I had met him when he was the governor of Maharashtra to seek his guidance regarding joining the Congress," he said.

Siddaramaiah recalled that his first memory of Krishna dated back to 1968, when as a college student he attended a townhall meeting when the former chief minister was contesting a Lok Sabha bypoll as a Praja Socialist Party candidate. "He was a good orator and parliamentarian with a long political career," the chief minister said, noting that Krishna was among a handful of legislators who were elected to both houses of the state legislature and Parliament. "It was during his tenure as CM that Bengaluru came to be known as Silicon Valley of India," Siddaramaiah said, adding that his contribution to the development of the state capital was immense. Though Krishna's dream of "turning Bengaluru into Singapore" was not realised, he succeeded in transforming Bengaluru into an international hub, he added.

Leader of the Opposition R Ashoka noted that Krishna was a great tennis enthusiast and used to play the game regularly apart from regularly visiting Wimbledon in England. "Krishna brought dignity to the city of Bengaluru. He created an atmosphere due to which leaders from any country prefer to visit the city after arriving in New Delhi," the BJP leader said. It was during Krishna's tenure as chief minister that work on Bengaluru Metro and the international airport was launched, Ashoka said, highlighting the challenges he had faced during the period, such as recurring droughts and the Kambalappalli massacre. At the Legislative Council, BJP MLC A H Vishwanath, who was Krishna's colleague in the state cabinet, recalled that he had written about Krishna's romantic relationship with Kannada actor B Saroja Devi in his book Halli Hakkiya Haadu. "This created a controversy



in the state and I also sent him a copy of the book when he was the Maharashtra governor. I called him up to ask whether he was saddened by what I had written in the book. He replied that I had written the truth. 'What is there to be sad about?' he asked me," Vishwanath said. Several MLAs also demanded a statue of Krishna be installed on the Vidhana Soudha premises.

## Maoists set car on fire on Telangana-AP border

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Kothagudem: CPI (Maoists) cadres have allegedly set a private car on fire on Bhadrachalam-Chintoor highway in Chintoor mandal of Alluri Seetharamaraju district in AP.



According to sources the Maoists forced the passengers in the car to get out of the vehicle and set it on fire at Sirivella village under Chintoor police station in the mandal during early hours on Tuesday. The local police reached the spot and investigated the incident.

## Portion of 180-year-old mosque demolished in UP's Fatehpur



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Bulldozers being used by the Fatehpur district administration in Uttar Pradesh to demolish an allegedly encroached part of the Noori Jama Masjid after the mosque committee failed to remove the encroachment despite two official notices, in Fatehpur. Bulldozers being used by the Fatehpur district administration in Uttar Pradesh to demolish an allegedly encroached part of the Noori Jama Masjid after the mosque committee failed to remove the encroachment despite two official notices, in Fatehpur. A portion of an around 180-year-old mosque in Uttar Pradesh's Fatehpur was demolished on Tuesday as it was allegedly encroaching upon the Banda-Fatehpur Road in the city. While the district administration said that a notice had been served to the Noori Jama Masjid to remove the encroached struc-

ture, the development came at a time when the mosque committee had approached the Allahabad High Court seeking relief.

"The committee has filed some petition in high court but it is yet to be listed for hearing," Avinash Tripathi, Additional District Magistrate (ADM), Finance and Revenue, Fatehpur, told The Indian Express. "The structure which has been demolished today was built in the last three years and the main building of the mosque is intact," he clarified. According to Tripathi, the Public Works Department (PWD) had issued notices to 139 people, including shopkeepers, house owners and the mosque committee, in August to remove the structures built by encroaching upon the road. The PWD sought to remove the encroachments to "begin work for strengthening the road and constructing drains", he added. "The PWD had marked the encroached section of all the buildings. All those served notices removed the encroachment in September. The mosque committee also demolished the encroached parts of the shops built adjacent to the mosque. The committee had assured to remove the structure which is part of the mosque, but they did not make it," ADM Tripathi said. The masjid committee members were not available to speak on the matter. The PWD had sought help from the administration to provide security while the alleged encroached structure of the mosque was being demolished. Adequate police force was there to maintain law and order at the spot, Tripathi said, adding that there were no protests while the demolition took place.

## Particulate matter high in 9 of 11 stations, 50% pollution from vehicles

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

More than half of the air pollution in Bengaluru in 2024 has been caused by vehicular emissions but levels of pollutants in the city are below the nationally prescribed standards, except for one class of Particulate Matter (PM10), the Karnataka Ministry of Environment and Forests informed the state Legislative Council Monday. In a reply to a query by MLC K C Thippeswamy, Karnataka Environment Minister Eshwar Khandre informed the Legislative Council that the contribution of the transport sector in the city to air pollution is 50.6 per cent compared to 16.9 per cent by dust, 11 per cent from building construction and clearance activities, 5.9 per cent from burning waste and 0.1 per cent from industries. "It has come to the notice of the state that due to vehicular traffic/emissions, road dust, and increased construction works, there is some air pollution in Bengaluru," said Khandre.

"However, according to the reports of 11 continuous ambient air measurement stations in Bangalore city for the year 2023-24, the standards do not exceed the national limit except for PM10 at a few locations. The measurements for Sulphur Dioxide (SO2), Nitrogen Dioxide (NO2) and Ammonia (NH3) at 11 places in Bangalore city during 2023-24 were well below the national limits of 50.0 µg/m³, 40.0 µg/m³ and 100.0 µg/m³," said the Karnataka environment minister. The measurement for PM2.5 was also below the national standard of 40.0 µg/m³, he said. The low levels of pollutants in the air in Bengaluru suggest a low risk for serious diseases like heart attacks and cancer, the reply indicated.

According to the measurement from 11 ambient air monitoring stations in Bengaluru, the level of PM10 is higher than the prescribed national standard of 60.0 µg/m³ in nine of the stations with the highest PM10 measurements at Silk



Board (92 µg/m³), R V Engineering College (84.6 µg/m³), and Kasturinarayan RTO office area (84.4 µg/m³). The lowest PM10 measurements in the city are from Basaveshwaranagar (46.1 µg/m³) and Nimhans (55.4 µg/m³). The measurements for Sulphur dioxide, Nitrogen Dioxide and Ammonia are significantly low across the 11 measurement stations, it shows.

"The Union Ministry of Forests, Environment and Climate Change has implemented the National Clean Air Program (NCAP) and identified four cities of the state ie Bengaluru, Hubli-Dharwad, Kalaburagi and Davangere as non-attainment cities. Among these cities, a 44-point action plan for Bengaluru city and a 27-point action plan for the remaining 3 cities are being prepared and implemented to control air pollution. comprehensively," Khandre said. "Further, to know the sources responsible for air pollution in four cities in the state, 'Source Apportionment and Emission Inventory Study' was conducted for Bengaluru city by the Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP), Bengaluru and IIT, Madras and accordingly steps are being taken to control air pollution," he added.

## As Maharashtra pushes for APAAR ID, a look at the unique identification system for school students

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

APAAR, which stands for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) identity (ID), is a 12-digit unique identification system for each student under the Central Government's 'One Nation, One student ID' initiative. APAAR, which stands for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) identity (ID), is a 12-digit unique identification system for each student under the Central Government's 'One Nation, One student ID' initiative. Maharashtra's school education department has been constantly pushing for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) identity (ID) generation for students. To expedite the process, the state has also designated days to generate APAAR ID calling them 'Mega APAAR Days' on two separate occasions; asking schools to conduct special drives for the work. Yet, APAAR IDs have been generated for only 60 per cent of students until now with schools facing various types of challenges, including limited knowledge about the new unique ID for students under the Central Government's 'One Nation, One student ID' initiative. As parents are trying to know more about APAAR ID, and schools across state are struggling with the Herculean task; here is an explainer on what is APAAR ID, its function and concerns around it. What is an APAAR ID?

APAAR, which stands for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) identity (ID), is a 12-digit unique identification system for each student under the Central Government's 'One Nation, One student ID' initiative. It will be a lifelong digital identity that will allow students to track their academic progress and achievements as it will function as digital storage for each student for academic records.

What is the function of APAAR ID?

This new digital identification will serve as a digital locker for every student to keep their academic records, important documents and achievement certificates. The APAAR ID also aims to make it easier to track academic records of any student and to reduce fraud and duplicate educational certificates by providing a single, trusted reference for educational institutions. Last year, in line with academic flexibility recommended under the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Academic Bank of Credit (ABC) was launched for higher education courses to ensure transparent and fair transfer of credits for students. The ABC, which essentially serves as a digital database to store credits earned by individual students, will be linked with the APAAR ID with an aim to have a single digital storage for all academic records of a student from pre-primary to higher education.



APAAR, which stands for Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) identity (ID), is a 12-digit unique identification system for each student under the Central Government's 'One Nation, One student ID' initiative. It will be a lifelong digital identity that will allow students to track their academic progress and achievements as it will function as digital storage for each student for academic records.

How is APAAR ID generated?

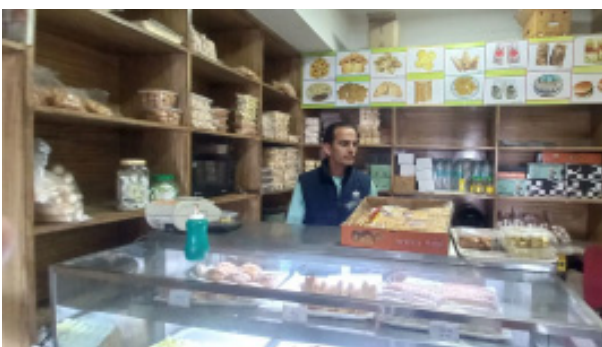
For APAAR ID generation, schools are required to first take consent from parents for each child. Schools are then enabled to create APAAR ID of students (whose parents have given consent) through the dedicated APAAR module tab available on the Unified District Information System for Education (UDISE) portal. Required details for this process are - student's name, gender and date of birth along with his/her AADHAR number and parents' names.

Is it compulsory to generate an APAAR ID?

The prerequisite of parental consent makes it a voluntary digital identity. However, with the government pushing for complete implementation by giving deadlines to schools; concerns are raised by a few, including parents who fear sharing their child's data including Aadhaar card details with the new system. According to schools, they are under pressure from the government to complete the APAAR ID generation amid issues such as technical glitches, time-consuming process, mismatching data for example incorrectly spelt names among others; apart from difficulty in obtaining parental consent.



## From murder convicts to entrepreneurs: A bakery goods business offers second chance to Himachal prison inmates



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

ucts," he says. Yograj was convicted in a murder case in 2012. Bakery products Yograj at the Himkaara booth in Himachal Pradesh Secretariat. (Express photo)

Major boost in earnings Both Raj Kumar and Yograj are set to be released in 2026. They earn a commission of Rs 4,500-5,500 per month, which helps them support their families during their prison term and also to plan for life post-incarceration. The total turnover from the sale of Himkaara products in 2023-24 was around Rs 4.69 crore, and it is split between the state exchequer and inmate welfare funds. The welfare funds are used to pay inmates' wages and also for several other requirements, ranging from prison libraries to transportation needs. Sanjeev Ranjhan Ojha, Director General of Prisons and Correctional Services, says the initiative has vastly increased the earnings of prisoners in the state's jails - from Rs 2.95 lakh in 2013-14 to Rs 2.19 crore in 2023-24. "Our bakery products, particularly because they are eggless, remain in high demand," he says. Prison inmates are selected for the initiative based on their conduct during imprisonment. They must have completed multiple paroles without violations and are typically nearing the end of their sentences. "These inmates leave jail at 9 am and return by 6 pm, with their activities monitored closely," says a senior official. Around 90 convicts, including two women, have been selected to run the booths and for other activities related to the business. Beyond bakery goods

The Himkaara initiative is not limited to food. Prisoners also produce handloom textiles, wooden and metallic items, as well as organic products like vermicompost. Himachal Pradesh houses nearly 3,000 inmates across 13 correctional facilities. Despite its overall successes, not all Himkaara initiatives have flourished. A book café launched under the project near Shimla's Ridge in 2017 struggled to attract customers. However, the overarching impact of the programme remains significant. For Raj Kumar and Yograj, the Himkaara booths are a step towards rehabilitation. As Raj Kumar puts it, "This opportunity has given me hope for a better future, for myself and my family."

## Chandigarh, Punjab, Haryana on yellow alert



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

temperature may fall further. Additionally, daytime temperatures, or maximum temperatures, are also expected to decline in the coming days.

A senior official from the IMD said, "Due to snowfall in the higher reaches, the city will experience a cold wave till December 14, following the western disturbance." A cold wave condition is defined as a minimum temperature below 10 degrees Celsius, with a deviation of 4.5 to 6.4 degrees below normal. Maximum temperature over recent days On Monday, the maximum temperature was recorded at 21.6 degrees Celsius, compared to 28 degrees on December 3. On December 7 and 8, the maximum temperatures were 24.6 degrees and 22 degrees, respectively. The cold wave conditions are expected to persist following the unusually warm days earlier this December. Night-time temperature The night-time temperature has dropped to its lowest this season. On December 8 and 9, the minimum temperatures were recorded at 7.7 and 8.4 degrees Celsius. On December 7, the temperature was 6.8 degrees Celsius. Prior to this, night-time temperatures ranged between 8 degrees and 13 degrees Celsius.

## Mumbai court rejects bail to 3 men booked in Laos fake recruitment scam

GNS News Agency, Dec 12



be used to run cyber scams by duping people for financial gains. It said the accused with specific roles given to each would conduct interviews, shortlist and then arrange logistics for those recruited.

They were then given 'jobs' in fake call centres with access to hacked Facebook accounts through which they would send friend requests to people in the US, UK and India with a fake name of 'Ana Flitova', posing as a Russian model, the NIA said. They were then asked to convince customers to invest in crypto currency and then duped them of their investments. "They (the accused) were party in recruiting and sending the youths from India under the guise of employment in LongSheng company, so as to achieve the objects of criminal conspiracy hatched by these accused and their other associates," special judge B D Shelke said in the order. The court also said that considering the nature and gravity of the offence, there is a possibility that the accused may flee or tamper with evidence or threaten witnesses if allowed to be released.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) that arrested the three men - Jerry Jacob, Godfrey Alvares and Sudarshan Darade alias Boss - in March opposed their pleas stating that the accused had been running a non-certified recruitment agency from 2021-2022. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) that arrested the three men - Jerry Jacob, Godfrey Alvares and Sudarshan Darade alias Boss - in March opposed their pleas stating that the accused had been running a non-certified recruitment agency from 2021-2022. A special court in Mumbai on December 6 denied bail to three men who were allegedly recruiting and sending Indian youths to Laos in Thailand to work for illegal cyber scammers.

## Pope Francis's much-awaited India visit likely after 'Jubilee Year' 2025

Thiruvananthapuram: Union Minister George Kurian on Saturday said the much-awaited visit of Pope Francis to India is likely to happen after 2025, which has been announced as the 'Jubilee Year' by the Catholic Church. He noted that India had already invited the Pope officially and Prime Minister Narendra Modi directly extended him the invitation. The rest of the matters and procedures were to be decided by the Vatican. The visit would be scheduled as per the convenience of Pope Francis, he told Asianet channel. Union Minister of State for Minority Affairs, Kurian was part of the delegation which reached Vatican to take part in the ordination of Archbishop George Jacob Koovakad

as Cardinal by Pope Francis at a function to be held on Saturday. Koovakad (51) from Kerala, has been organising Pope Francis' international tours since 2020 and will be among the 21 clergies elevated to the rank of Cardinal. Previously, Koovakad, who held the title of Monsignor, was declared the Titular Archbishop of Nisibis in Turkey. "The Church is celebrating 2025 as the Jubilee Year of Jesus Christ's birth. So, Vatican says that the Pope will be engaged during the (next) year," "So, as per the information we received, Pope Francis will visit India after the Jubilee Year. We expect that he will be visiting (the country) at the earliest," Kurian added.

## Emami fined Rs 15 lakh over 'popular' cream for men. Here's why



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

The consumer court ordered Emami to pay Rs 14.5 lakh to the Delhi State Consumer Welfare Fund and Rs 50,000 as compensation to Jain, who had filed the case in 2013. It also ordered the company to pay Rs 10,000 to the complainant as litigation costs. The consumer court ordered Emami to pay Rs 14.5 lakh to the Delhi State Consumer Welfare Fund and Rs 50,000 as compensation to Jain, who had filed the case in 2013. It also ordered the company to pay Rs 10,000 to the complainant as litigation costs. A consumer court in Delhi on Monday directed Emami Limited to pay Rs 15 lakh in damages after a man had approached it, alleging that the company's claims about its Fair and Handsome cream were misleading.

This was the second time Emami was fined in the same case. In 2015, the same consumer court ruled in favour of the complainant, Nikhil Jain, and Emami was directed to pay a fine of Rs 15 lakh. That order was, however, set aside after an appeal. The ruling issued on Monday followed the case being sent back to the District Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission (Central District) for a fresh hearing. The consumer court ordered Emami to pay Rs 14.5 lakh to the Delhi State Consumer Welfare Fund and Rs 50,000 as compensation to Jain, who had filed the case in 2013. It also ordered the company to pay Rs 10,000 to the complainant as litigation costs.

## Ensure release of prisoners languishing unnecessarily in jails: Madras High Court

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

The Madras High Court has asked its Registrar General to ensure that the process for release of prisoners languishing unnecessarily in jails was accelerated by completing the formalities. Filing of necessary petitions through the Legal Aid Services before the competent court should also be ensured. A division bench comprising Justices S M Subramaniam and M Jyothiraman passed the order on Monday on proceedings initiated by it. In its order, the bench said the Additional Public Prosecutor submitted that as per the prison department, 153 remand prisoners were still languishing in various prisons across Tamil Nadu even after grant of bail.

As many as 22 convict prisoners were also in prison after suspension of sentence by the appellate courts. The Additional public prosecutor also submitted that there was delay in receiving the bail orders from the District courts. He submitted that as far as the High Court was concerned, order copies were received immediately, the bench added. The bench said in this regard, it was necessary to implead the Registrar General to ensure that the process in this regard were accelerated to ensure that the prisoners languishing unnecessarily in prisons stand released by completing the formalities and by filing necessary petitions through the Legal Aid Services before the competent court. The Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry was also impleaded as respondent, the bench added.

The bench said the Member Secretary, Legal Services Authority submitted that swift action will be taken in coordi-



nation with the High Court Registry and necessary legal aid assistance will be provided to the prisoners across the State, so as to ascertain the number of prisoners languishing in prison even after grant of bail or suspension of sentence, as the case may be, after completing necessary formalities. The bench said the Tamil Nadu government has issued a GO dated February 5, 2024, implementing the Central Government scheme for "providing financial assistance to poor prisoners" in the State. The details regarding the assistance already provided and the pending cases were also to be furnished before this Court, and all necessary steps were directed to be taken to ensure that the eligible prisoners get the benefit of the said scheme as per the government order. The authorities were expected to complete the said effort as expeditiously as possible and preferably within a period of three weeks and report before this Court on January 6, 2025, the bench added.

## BJP posts video of 'Sheesh Mahal' where former CM Arvind Kejriwal lived, calls him 'Delhi ka millionaire' in rap song

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

delhi arvind kejriwal house The video of the bungalow, shared by Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva on X on Tuesday, begins at its gate and proceeds to show a well-equipped gym and a spa-cum-bathroom, among other facilities. Calling it "Sheesh Mahal", the BJP has released a four-minute video giving a tour of the Civil Lines bungalow where AAP national convenor Arvind Kejriwal lived when he was the Delhi chief minister. The BJP also shared a rap song "Delhi ka millionaire", highlighting the allegations of corruption against Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders and ministers.

The video of the bungalow, shared by Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva on X on Tuesday, begins at its gate and proceeds to show a well-equipped gym and a spa-cum-bathroom, among other facilities. It also highlights a chandelier installed inside the washroom area, a massage table, a Jacuzzi, and a sensor-equipped shower. Earlier, the BJP had alleged that the house in Civil Lines was constructed by flouting rules. Now, as the Delhi Assembly polls approach, it has decided to put the spotlight on the bungalow. An inquiry is underway against Public Works Department officials in the matter. Posting the video on X, Sachdeva wrote, "Delhi ke janta ki khoon pasine ki kamayi loot kar 'khas' aam aadmi ne khada kiya sheesh mahal. Dekhiye gaadi, bungalow, suraksha nahi lunga kehne wala Kejriwal ke Sheesh Mahal ka shaan-o-shaukat (By looting the hard-earned money of Delhi's people, the 'special' man of Delhi has built this Sheesh Mahal. Look at the house of Kejriwal, who said he will not avail of privileges like cars, bungalow or security)."

In the rap song "Keju hai Dilli ka millionaire", posted on X, it said, "Liquor deals, I get liquor money, super fast, false nature, does not care, Keju hai dill ka millionaire," sharing it under the hashtag "#BrashtachariAAP." The song also talks about pollution in the capital, waterlogging, poor infrastructure and cleanliness, and landfill sites, while mentioning electrical fittings, chandeliers, recliners, and imported marble. Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said, "Look at the video, this is not any normal house, it's a museum of corruption... Kejriwal who calls himself a people's man, has looted the people to enjoy in the sauna and Jacuzzi." A senior BJP leader said, "We will release more videos of the house in sure course to shatter Kejriwal's image of an Aam Aadmi." The leader added that the party will play the video



and song throughout its campaign and a committee has been formed for the same. Assembly elections are scheduled to be held in Delhi in February 2025. A three-cornered fight is expected between the AAP, BJP and the Congress. In the 2020 polls, the BJP won eight out of the 70 seats while the AAP won 62.

## G Pranavaaditya and M Aaradhya Nissi win under-11 Chess tournament

Hyderabad: G Pranavaaditya and M Aaradhya Nissi won the under-11 boys' and girls' titles, respectively, in the Children's Chess Tournament organised by Dhruv School of Civil Services Studies and Pragathi Chess Academy at Dhruv School of Civil Services Studies, Tarnaka, on Monday.

In the under-9 category, Ishaan Sathiraju and Dia Parthasarathy clinched the boys' and girls' titles, respectively.

Results: U-11: Boys: 1. G Pranavaaditya, 2. K Kritihikdev, 3. Sesham Dhanush; Girls: 1. M Aaradhya Nissi, 2. Aaradhana Aanandraj, 3. Sejal Sakunia; U-9: Boys: 1. Ishaan Sathiraju, 2. Devaamsh Kothapalli, 3. Chetan Maale; Girls: 1. Dia Parthasarathy, 2. Anaya Sharma, 3. Swara Deepak Phasge.



# Israeli PM says won't stop Gaza war 'now'



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Monday (December 9, 2024) he would not stop the war in Gaza "now", with renewed efforts towards a ceasefire underway. Speaking at a press conference in Jerusalem 14 months into the war against Hamas Palestinian militants, he said "if we end the war now, Hamas will return, recover, rebuild and attack us again -- and that is what we do not want to go back to." Mr. Netanyahu reiterated that he had set the goal of "the annihilation of Hamas, the elimination of its military and administrative capabilities" to prevent future attacks but said that the objective was not yet complete. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on October 23 that Israel had "managed to dismantle Hamas's military capac-

ity" and eliminated its senior leadership. With those successes, he said, it was time to "get the hostages home and bring the war to an end with an understanding of what will follow." In recent days, there had been signs that months of failed ceasefire and hostage release negotiations might be revived and achieve a breakthrough.

Qatar, a main mediator, said on Saturday there was new "momentum" for negotiations created by the election of Donald Trump in the United States. A source close to the Hamas delegation said at the same time that Turkey as well as Egypt and Qatar had been "making commendable efforts to stop the war," and a new round of talks could begin soon. On Sunday, the prime minister met with the families of hostages held in Gaza and said that Israel's wars on Hezbollah and Hamas would facilitate negotiations for their release. Protesters, including relatives of the hostages, have repeatedly called for a deal to free the captives and accused him of prolonging the war.

The war in Gaza was sparked by Hamas's October 7, 2023 attack which resulted in the deaths of 1,208 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on official data. During the attack, militants also kidnapped 251 hostages, 96 of whom remain in Gaza, including 34 who the military says are dead. Israel's retaliatory offensive in Gaza has killed at least 44,758 people, mostly civilians, according to data from the Hamas-run health ministry that is considered reliable by the UN.

# Despairing Syrians search notorious Sednaya prison for missing relatives

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

As families desperately scoured the filthy cells of Syria's forbidding Sednaya prison on Monday (December 9, 2024) for any sign of long-detained relatives after its gates were flung open by rebels, hope for finding missing loved ones began to fade. Thousands of prisoners spilled out of president Bashar al-Assad's pitiless detention system after he was toppled on Sunday (December 8, 2024), sometimes to tearful reunions with relatives who believed they had been executed years earlier. But countless families were still trawling dark corridors and hidden cells in the labyrinthine complex for a trace of loved ones detained for attending protests, defying authorities or simply voicing discontent. Members of the Syrian civil defence group, known as the White Helmets, search for prisoners at Sednaya prison, with rebel fighters around in Sednaya, Syria on December 9, 2024.

Members of the Syrian civil defence group, known as the White Helmets, search for prisoners at Sednaya prison, with rebel fighters around in Sednaya, Syria on December 9, 2024. | Photo Credit: Reuters Ahmed Najjar had come to Damascus from Aleppo, hoping to find his brother's two children, seized by Mr. Assad's security forces in 2012. "We're looking. They're saying there's an underground prison," he said. Rumours spread on Sunday (December 8, 2024) that thousands more inmates were still imprisoned in underground cells that could not be reached.

The White Helmets rescue organisation, which for years has dug through fallen buildings after air strikes, deployed a team. "They had a map from a defected Syrian Army officer and broke down one wall and found nothing," said one of the rescue workers. "They broke a second and found a door." But by Monday afternoon (December 9, 2024) there was no sign of more prisoners. Outside, Intsar al-Jaber sat waiting for news. The 45-year-old's brother and cousin were imprisoned in Sednaya but she had not been allowed to see them since 2014. People run towards Sednaya prison as members of the Syrian civil defence group, known as the White Helmets search for prisoners underground in Sednaya, Syria on December 9, 2024.

People run towards Sednaya prison as members of the Syrian civil defence group, known as the White Helmets search for prisoners underground in Sednaya, Syria on December 9, 2024. | Photo Credit: Reuters They told me then that my brother was dead and not to come back. [They said] 'Your brother is a terrorist, and he died, so there's nothing for you here. Don't come!' But she continued to wait and hope. At a mosque on the road to the prison, people were registering names and phone numbers in case imprisoned relatives were found. One woman said she had seen her son in a screenshot of released prisoners on Sunday (December 8, 2024). Syria: rebels enter Damascus, Assad flees Syria Gunfire was heard in Syria's capital Damascus early on December 8. The Syrian government fell early on December 8 in a stunning end to the 50-year rule of the Assad family. Islamist-led rebels declared that they have taken Damascus after sweeping through other parts of the country. Syrian President Bashar al-Assad has fled the



country | Video Credit: The Hindu Sednaya's crematorium for hanged prisoners Rights groups have reported mass executions in Syria's prisons, and the United States said in 2017 it had identified a new crematorium at Sednaya for hanged prisoners. Torture was widely documented.

Videos have emerged of some shaven-headed, near-skeletal prisoners barely able to give their names or say where they were from. Reuters was not able to verify them all but the large-scale freeing of prisoners is not in dispute. Inside the solitary confinement cells, there was water and mud on the concrete floors. Each had a single metal bowl for food. Excrement lay around. Members of the Syrian civil defence group, known as the White Helmets, search for prisoners underground at Sednaya prison, with rebel fighters around, in Sednaya, Syria on December 9, 2024. Members of the Syrian civil defence group, known as the White Helmets, search for prisoners underground at Sednaya prison, with rebel fighters around, in Sednaya, Syria on December 9, 2024. | Photo Credit: Reuters People searching the prison rifled through discarded papers and asked former inmates if they knew of routes to other storeys, while others smashed down walls or drilled into the floor searching for hidden cells.

Several times, a breakthrough revealed a hidden hallway, prompting bursts of gunfire from rebels to alert the thousands waiting. Each time, a crowd dashed forward. One woman screamed "My son, I'm coming, I'm coming" while another pleaded, "God, please don't disappoint me." A man called Mazen said Mr. Assad's police had taken 10 of his relatives including his uncle, his brother-in-law and siblings and cousins. "We got a video here to a secret door. I gave it to the rescue workers. They are trying to dig but they haven't got anything yet," he said.

Fadel Abdul Ghany, who heads the Syrian Network for Human Rights, said the fact that the prison doors had simply been flung open had made it harder to trace inmates, and set genuine criminals free alongside political prisoners. "They need to run this as well, just like they're trying to manage other things, keep things under control," he said. Outside the prison, where traffic once passed quickly, with passengers' eyes averted, a long queue of cars waited to get in while others scrambled across the scrubby countryside on foot and cut barbed wire fences to join the crowds searching inside.

# Attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh: Protest march held from White House to U.S. Capitol

Raising slogans such as "We want Justice" and "Protect Hindus" the peaceful demonstrators urged the Joe Biden administration and the incoming Donald Trump administration to ask the new government in Bangladesh to take steps to protect Hindus but also take action against those responsible for this. Bangladesh crisis: 10 temples attacked, Hindu musician Rahul Ananda's house torched

The march was held on Monday (December 9, 2024) over attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh. Organisers of the event — StopHinduGenocide.org, Bangladeshi Diaspora organisations and HinduAction — demanded that the companies in the U.S. stop buying garments from Bangladesh, which is heavily dependent on its exports to the U.S. "This march is not just a cry for justice; it is a demand for accountability. Today, the Bangladeshi Hindu community and the larger Hindu diaspora from the Indian subcontinent has come in support of the Bangladesh Hindu community because there is continuing violence going on in Bangladesh, specifically in Chittagong and Rangpur area, as well as in some other parts of the country," said Utsav Chakrabarti, from HinduAction.

"Hindus are being targeted, their temples are being burnt down and destroyed. Their houses are being looted. Chinmoy Das, who is one of the Hindu leaders in the Chittagong area, has been incarcerated and is facing torture. The community around the world is extremely worried about it. So, people are trying to make sure that the White House and people in America are aware of what's going on in Bangladesh," Mr. Chakrabarti said. "We have gathered here in front of the White House to ask for justice for Bangladeshi Hindus..." Narasimha Koppula from Virginia



said. Srikanth Akunuri from HinduAction said unspeakable tragedies are happening for the Bangladeshi Hindus. "We also demand that ISKCON leader Chinmoy Das be released," he said. Prasenjit Dutta, head of a Bangladeshi community organisation from Atlantic City demanded the release of ISKCON leader Chinmoy Das. "I don't know why the Biden administration is not doing anything. We are asking the White House to act," he said. Mohinder Gulati, president of Global Hindu Temple Network, said the atrocities against Hindus in Bangladesh are an attack against this minority community. "Bangladesh should be debarred from sending peacekeeping forces to other countries. We have also written to the United Nations Human Rights Organisation, UN Women, and UNICEF that all the international obligations that Bangladesh has, that they should be held accountable for those obligations," he said. "World Bank, Asian Development Bank, IMF, they are lending to Bangladesh. They have their own policies.

# Israeli army in Golan buffer zone violates 1974 deal: UN



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Israeli troops that have moved into the buffer zone on the edge of the Israeli-annexed Golan Heights "constitute a violation" of the 1974 disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria, a UN spokesman said. The UN peacekeeping force deployed in the Golan Heights, known as UNDOF, "informed the Israeli counterparts that these actions would constitute a violation of the 1974 disengagement agreement," said Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for Secretary-General Antonio Guterres. He said that the Israeli

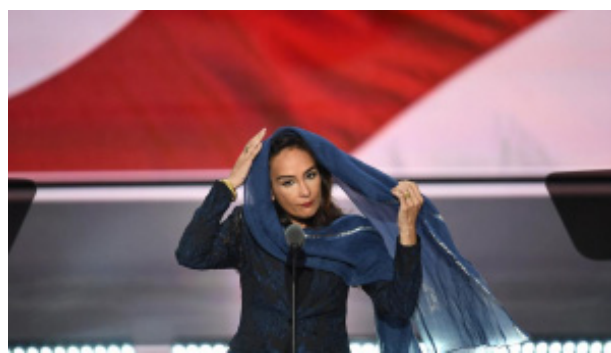
forces that entered the zone were still present in at least three locations. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced on Sunday he had ordered the army to "seize" the demilitarized zone in the Syrian-controlled part of the Golan Heights after rebels swept Syrian president Bashar al-Assad from power. Most of the Golan Heights plateau has been occupied since 1967 by Israel, which later annexed it in a move not recognized by most of the international community. In 1974 a buffer zone was established to separate the Israeli-held and Syrian territories, with UN peacekeepers stationed there. Israel's troop deployment in Golan Heights amid the downfall of Assad, Israel announced a troop deployment to the Golan Heights citing "the possible entry of armed individuals into the buffer zone." Israeli forces "will continue to operate as long as necessary in order to preserve the buffer zone and defend Israel," it added. Israeli troops "have entered the area of separation and have been moving within that area where they remain in at least three locations throughout the area of separation," Dujarric said. "There should be no military forces or activities in the area of separation. And Israel and Syria must continue to uphold the terms of that 1974 agreement, and preserve stability in the Golan," he said.

# Trump selects farmers agitation supporter Harmeet K. Dhillon as Assistant Attorney General for civil rights

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

The incoming Donald Trump administration has appointed Harmeet K. Dhillon as the Assistant Attorney General for civil rights. The appointment acquires importance from the Indian point of view as the Biden administration had accused India of planning to assassinate, pro-Khalistan activist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, a U.S. citizen, on American soil. Ms. Dhillon has been vocal about human rights and acquired prominence during the 2020-21 farmers protest when she criticised the police crackdown against the protesting farmers in Singhu and Ghazipur borders near Delhi. A number of political and cultural figures from the United States had expressed support for the farmers protest during the height of the agitation against the three controversial farm laws that Prime Minister Modi's government had tried to introduce in the beginning of his second term in office. Climate activist Greta Thunberg and singer Rihanna were among the prominent names who supported the farmers. Ms. Dhillon too had expressed her support for the farmers and highlighted her roots in Punjab.

On November 30, 2020, Ms. Dhillon retweeted a message from British-Indian MP Tan Dhesi and said, "As the Punjab-born descendant of farmers, my heart breaks to see Punjabi farmers assaulted for protesting Indian gov't's probig corporation farm bill that will destroy their farms, way of life and culture" She had urged PM Modi to "hear them, meet with them and compromise" and used a hashtag #IStandWithFarmers. Ms. Dhillon has maintained her stance in support of Indian farmers over the past five years and she extended support to them online in February this year when the simmering farm protests erupted in Punjab once again. When Congressman Ro Khanna expressed concern about the political situation in Pakistan, Ms Dhillon remarked, "What's happening in India right now @RoKhanna? Are you concerned about turning off the internet in Punjab, shooting protesters, government officials... What about the government ordering @X (formerly Twitter) not show the accounts of journalists, activists?" She further accused the Government of India of disturbing social harmony and question Ro



Khanna on "govt officials whipping up hatred against farmer protesters".

She intensified her criticism of the Modi government after the June 2023 murder of pro-Khalistan preacher Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, British Columbia hit India-Canada diplomatic relations. She highlighted a news report that brought to light alleged involvement of the Indian government in a plot to kill Pannun. On November 23, 2023, she said on 'X' "Like I said, India has sent death squads to target North American Sikhs outspoken on civil and human rights conditions in Punjab, both to Canada and now the US," and questioned the Biden government saying, "Will our government do anything about it, or just pander endlessly over artificial DEI nonsense? Lives are at risk! The Biden administration had charged Indian citizen and former official of the external intelligence wing R&AW Vikas Yadav of directing the plot to kill Pannun, chief of Sikhs for Justice (SFJ). Mr. Yadav was identified as "CC-1" in the original indictment filed in the case in 2023. The ruling BJP had further intensified its criticism of the U.S. establishment's policy regarding India and had accused the state department of plotting to destabilize India. In this context, Ms. Dhillon's opinions on civil liberty-related cases concerning India will be keenly observed.

# Iran, Israel relationship or absence of it source of concern, says External Affairs Minister Jaishankar

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

The relationship or absence of it between Israel and Iran has been a source of concern and some of India's diplomatic efforts are focused on that aspect, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said on Sunday (December 8, 2024). In an address at the Manama Dialogue in Bahrain, Mr. Jaishankar, without directly referring to attacks on commercial ships in the Red Sea by Houthi militants, said India has an interest in trying to mitigate the security situation. Mr. Jaishankar, on a two-day visit to Bahrain from Saturday (December 7, 2024), touched upon various issues, including how to prevent conflicts from spreading further, the importance of key connectivity projects and the need to improve the security situation in the region. "In recent times, for all of us, the relationship or absence of it between Israel and Iran has been particularly a source of concern, so some of our diplomatic efforts have focused on that particular aspect," he said. There have been mounting global concerns over escalating tensions between Iran and Israel in the last few months. In October, Iran fired around 200 missiles into Israel in response to Israel's killing of Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah and other commanders of the Lebanese militant outfit. Israel subsequently retaliated against the Iranian strikes.

Talking about the importance of West Asia for New Delhi, the external affairs minister also highlighted India's sustained economic growth. "India is today almost a USD 4 trillion economy, (and) we expect to comfortably double that this decade. Our trade is today around USD 800 billion, that too should at least double this decade," he said.

"So I again cannot overstate the stakes that we have because this region is the immediate for us the world beyond our borders that immediately awaits us," he said. In his remarks, Mr. Jaishankar also referred to the situation in the Red Sea and said the security domain is a key area for strategic regional cooperation. "And we have had very significant security challenges in this area with a very deep and disastrous impact for trade in Asia," he said.

"So when we look at the diversion of maritime routes and the insurance costs, and the shipping costs and the container costs and the delay that it has imposed, obviously, you know, India, but not just India, we have an interest in trying to mitigate that situation," he added. In view of the volatile situation in the Red Sea, shipments were diverted to other routes that had increased the cost of transportation significantly. The external affairs minister also briefly spoke about India's naval presence in the region. "We have actually had a naval presence in this region in the Gulf of Aden, Somalia, Northern Arabian Sea. Over the year it's been roughly about 30 ships, the peak was about 12 ships at one point of time which were deployed there," he said. "And in the last year, we have actually responded to 24 actual incidents, escorted 250 ships, rescued 120 crew members. So we are making our contributions, we (are) working in tandem with Operation Prosperity Guardian. We have our own nationally named operation," he said. "Operation Pros-



perity Guardian' is a US-led military mission that was launched late last year to jointly address security challenges in the southern Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Mr. Jaishankar said India intends to increase its bilateral exercise both in the Gulf with its partners as well as in the Mediterranean. "So in the Gulf, I think the Gulf countries have been our fairly regular partners by now and in almost every case we have seen an uptick in our shared activities," he said. "In the Mediterranean, particularly, apart from Israel, with Greece, with Egypt, we have had significant exercises this year," he added.

# 2024 on track to be 'warmest year' on record, EU scientists say

New Delhi: The year 2024 is set to be the warmest on record and the first with an average temperature above 1.5 degrees Celsius, European climate agency Copernicus said on Monday.

Also, November 2024 became the second-warmest (after November 2023) with an average surface air temperature of 14.10 degrees Celsius — 0.73 degrees Celsius above the 1991–2020 average for the month. The month marked another milestone in global warming, recording a temperature 1.62 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. It also became the 16th month in the past 17 months where global temperatures exceeded the critical 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold above pre-industrial levels, the agency said. According to the India Meteorological Department, India experienced the second warmest November since 1901, with the average maximum temperature clocking 29.37 degrees Celsius — 0.62 degree above normal. For the year so far (January to November), the global average temperature anomaly stands at 0.72 degrees Celsius above the 1991-2020 average, making it the highest on record for this period and 0.14 degrees Celsius warmer than the corresponding period in 2023.



## Fiscal-monetary coordination was 'at its best' in last 6 years: Shaktikanta Das



helped us to deal with the multiple challenges during the last six years," Das said on social media platform X.

Thanking his colleagues at the RBI, Das said, "together, we successfully navigated an exceptionally difficult period of unprecedented global shocks. May the RBI grow even taller as an institution of trust and credibility. My best wishes to each one of you." "Immensely grateful to the PM @narendramodi for giving me this opportunity to serve the country as the Governor of the RBI and for his guidance and encouragement. Benefited a lot from his ideas and thoughts," Das said. He also thanked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman "for her constant support and backing". "Fondly recall the warmth, trust and confidence of late Arun Jaitley on me when I served as the RBI Governor (initial months) and earlier as Secretary Revenue and Economic Affairs," Das said. He also thanked all the stakeholders in the financial sector and in the economy, experts and economists, industry bodies and associations, organisations in the agriculture, cooperative & service sectors for their inputs and policy suggestions.

Outgoing Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das on Tuesday said the co-ordination between the government and the RBI was "at its best" in the last six years. "The fiscal-monetary coordination was at its best and

## 'To understand all perspectives, do what's the best for the economy': RBI Governor-designate Sanjay Malhotra

Sanjay Malhotra, RBI, inflation, business news, indian express As Sanjay Malhotra steps into his role as the RBI Governor, the growth-inflation balancing act will rank among his top priorities amid concerns in some quarters of the Indian economy having slipped into a cyclical slowdown phase.

A day before he is supposed to take official charge at the helm of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor, the Governor-designate Sanjay Malhotra said all perspectives have to be taken into account and that he'd strive to do what is "best for the economy". "One has to understand the turf, all perspectives and do what's best for the economy," Malhotra told reporters outside the Ministry of Finance at North Block in Delhi.

Malhotra will take charge as 26th RBI Governor on Wednesday. The outgoing RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das will demit office this evening. The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Monday gave its nod for the selection of the 56-year-old Malhotra as the 26th RBI Governor with effect from December 11 for a period of three years.

A B.Tech in Computer Science and Engineering from IIT Kanpur in 1989, Malhotra later pursued his Master's in Public Policy from Princeton University. He's currently Revenue Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and before this was the Secretary, Department of Financial Services.

As Malhotra steps into his role as the RBI Governor, the growth-inflation balancing act will rank among his top priorities amid concerns in some quarters of the Indian economy having slipped into a cyclical slowdown phase. A near two-year low 5.4 per cent GDP growth rate in July-September has already resulted in the RBI slashing its growth forecast by 60 basis points to 6.6 per cent for FY25. It has, however, maintained a neutral stance for monetary policy amid a continuing prolonged battle to bring down inflation within the range of the mandated medium-term tar-



get of 4 +/- 2 per cent.

Malhotra is taking charge at a time when indications of a slowdown in the economy are coming in from multiple quarters — a marked slide in credit growth, flagging consumption demand, especially in urban areas, and continuing softness in states' and central governments' capital expenditure. A prolonged pause in monetary policy has already widened the gulf between the government and the RBI. The outgoing RBI governor Das has tried to resolve some of these concerns raised by the government — whether it involved reducing the high FY25 GDP growth forecast of 7.2 per cent to 6.6 per cent or attempting to address credit slowdown with a 50 basis points cut in Cash Reserve Ratio (CRR) that is aimed at boosting liquidity in the financial system. However, the perceived delay in cutting the key policy rate has been a matter of difference between the RBI and the government as a high interest rate regime along with other macroprudential measures taken by the RBI such as higher risk weights on unsecured personal loans, a discussion paper on higher provisioning for project loans, and steps for digital lending seem to have had a collective impact in dampening growth.

## IT Ministry to prepare roadmap for power supply to AI data centres



able energy to run operations. For instance, the Adani group will supply roughly 61 MW of electricity from its upcoming solar-wind hybrid project in Gujarat's Khavda to Google's cloud operations in India.

As per a report released in September by Tata Power Company, the company is planning two pumped storage plants (PSPs) near Pune with a cumulative capacity of around 3,000 MW, for which the Central Transmission Utility of India (CTUIL) has received applications for drawal of 1,400 MW from data centre loads in Mumbai beginning January 2027. "The applications are under process and connectivity is being proposed at South Kalamb S/s to address the requirement of drawal of such huge quantum of power," the transmission planning authority said in a September report.

In October, the Central Electricity Authority (CEA) discussed the anticipated surge in power demand from data centres during a National Committee on Transmission (NCT) meeting, where CEA chairperson Ghanshyam Prasad directed the Power Data Management and Load Forecasting Division to study the load pattern of data centres. The direction followed an assessment of a major grid event in north India this June, which caused a load reduction of approximately 16.5 GW. An executive from Grid-India told the NCT that existing load modelling approaches need to be reviewed in light of changing load behaviour. "Further, as a large quantum of electrolyzer and data centre load is also envisaged to be connected at ISTS (Inter-State Transmission System) level in near future, it is important that adequate reactive power compensation is planned nearby such ISTS load feeding stations," the executive said. Reactive power compensation near load centres helps prevent tripping and load shedding by stabilizing voltage levels and reducing strain on the grid. Data centre developers in India are aiming to increase energy efficiency, which is indicated by a low Power Usage Effectiveness (PUE) ratio. In India, the PUE averages around 1.9 while for green data centres, the PUE is lower at 1.3.

## Adani Portfolio of companies 'most attractive' among India corporates

Mumbai: The Adani Portfolio of companies appear "most attractive" among Indian corporates, according to Japanese brokerage Nomura, as other Indian corporates stay at 'expensive levels' compared to the Group companies. In a new report, the global brokerage said that the ports-to-power conglomerate will also be able to withstand recent turmoil brought on by allegations in an indictment by the US Department of Justice (DoJ). "Adani complex looks most attractive among other IG (investment grade) corporates from India. Other Indian IG corporates stay at expensive levels vis a vis Adani complex," the note read.

## Liver expert shares pic of 'weekends only' alcohol drinking man's liver; find out how having it even once a week can affect you



Sometimes, what seems like a harmless indulgence can have a profound impact. Choices we make in the name of relaxation or celebration may leave lasting impressions on our health, often going unnoticed until it's too late. The silent yet significant role of alcohol drinking is now sparking renewed attention, urging us to rethink its influence on our well-being.

Dr Cyriac Abby Philips, popularly known as "The Liver Doc," recently went viral for a post comparing the livers of two individuals—a regular weekend drinker and his wife, a healthy liver donor. The image, showing the stark difference between the drinker's spotted, dark liver and the donor's pink, healthy liver, sent shockwaves across the internet, reigniting discussions about the dangers of alcohol consumption.

Dr Philips' post explained that even seemingly moderate alcohol consumption can severely damage the liver over time. He wrote, "Hello. Just wanted to show the inside

of the liver of a 32-year-old, 'weekends only' alcohol drinking man, and the healthy donor liver of his wife that he received, that will help him survive to see their little daughter grow up." Dr Srinivas Bojanapu, a liver transplant surgeon at Kauvery Hospitals, explains that alcohol, even in moderate amounts, acts as a toxin to the liver. The organ metabolises alcohol, producing carcinogenic byproducts and depleting resources needed for other bodily functions. The effects of alcohol vary depending on several factors, including: Weekend drinking may appear harmless, but it can trigger liver damage due to the cumulative stress on the organ over time. While it is possible for severe liver damage to result from weekend drinking, assessing alcohol consumption retrospectively is challenging, said Dr Bojanapu. People often underestimate or misreport their drinking habits. Factors like individual susceptibility, genetic variations, and coexisting health conditions also play a role in determining the extent of liver damage.

Should you avoid alcohol altogether?

The consensus among medical professionals is clear: the best way to protect your liver is to avoid alcohol altogether. While occasional consumption may not harm everyone equally, the unpredictability of how alcohol affects different individuals makes abstinence the safest option. Moreover, staying away from alcohol also reduces the risk of other severe health conditions, including cancer, heart disease, and neurological disorders. If you suspect liver damage or have concerns about your drinking habits, consult a healthcare provider for guidance and support.

## Kavita Kaushik on playing Chandramukhi Chautala in 'FIR': 'She's like my alter ego'



She may have taken a backseat from television, but Kavita Kaushik's name remains synonymous with FIR, one of the most popular shows in Indian television history. Ask her if she misses playing her character on the show — Chandramukhi Chautala — and pat comes the reply: "Absolutely... she was unapologetically real, just like me."

The actor spoke to indianexpress.com on the sidelines of the Crime Literature Festival in Dehradun, talking more about her journey and why she no longer enjoys television. During the interaction, she also opened up about her fitness routine, becoming a yogini, and becoming an entrepreneur. Read the edited excerpts below.

Q: Did you recently announce your decision to quit TV?

Kavita Kaushik: No, I haven't said anything like that. I said that I don't enjoy the regressive content on television. I've reached a stage where I feel responsible for the kind of work I do. Shows like Naagin, Chudail, or saas-bahu dramas don't appeal to me. Television hasn't evolved much in the past 10-15 years, and I don't find the current offerings exciting. I was fortunate to do FIR for 10 years. It gave me creative satisfaction. Unless it's something challenging or a guest appearance, I wouldn't commit to the long, exhausting hours that TV demands.

Q: You're best remembered for playing Chandramukhi Chautala. Do you miss being her? If yes, what was the best thing about it?

Kavita Kaushik: Absolutely! Chandramukhi Chautala is like my alter ego. What I miss most is her limitless energy and her freedom to do anything. At times, I felt my real personality was overshadowed by hers. The love and admiration I've received make it all worth it. Even today, young kids are introduced to FIR by their parents, which speaks volumes about the character's impact.

Q: What made Chandramukhi Chautala strike a chord with the audience?

Kavita Kaushik: Her authenticity. She was unapologetically real, just like me. I speak my mind, which sometimes works in my favour and sometimes doesn't. Chandramukhi's rawness and her commanding personality resonated deeply with the audience.

Q: Did you ever feel that Chandramukhi's portrayal belittled cops?

Kavita Kaushik: Not at all. We never showed cops in a negative light. In fact, I've always respected the uniform. For 10 years, I refused offers worth lakhs to perform or

attend events in a police uniform because I didn't want to disrespect it. Q: You're a certified yogini. Tell us about your fitness routine. Kavita Kaushik: My fitness routine is simple. I avoid eating out and focus on home-cooked meals. When I feel I've gained weight, I get back to working out.

Kavita Kaushik Kavita Kaushik at the Crime Literature Festival, Dehradun. (Photo: PR handout)

Q: One myth about yoga you'd like to debunk?

Kavita Kaushik: If you see someone doing yoga with heavy makeup, don't take it seriously. Yoga isn't about glamour but mindfulness, connecting with your inner self, and achieving oneness with divine energy. It's more than physical postures; it's about creating positive energy through asanas and dhyana.

Q: What's the best and worst part of being an actor?

Kavita Kaushik: The best part is people's immense love and appreciation. The worst part is that people often forget you're human and expect you to be perfect always. They tend to ignore that you, too, have flaws and bad days.

Q: What's in the pipeline for your homemade beauty brand?

Kavita Kaushik: I'm very proud of my brand. My husband and I are working on several new products that will soon be available nationwide and internationally. You can explore them on our website.

Q: Does being an actor and being constantly in the limelight affect mental health?

Kavita Kaushik: Yes, being in the spotlight comes with challenges, and it can affect mental health. It's important to stop ridiculing people who are struggling. Mental health is serious; anyone acting unusually might be dealing with real issues. Let's practice compassion.

## Skipping breakfast vs dinner: Fasting method that works best for your health is...

Fasting has become a popular practice for those looking to manage their weight or boost their health. Among various fasting schedules, two common approaches stand out: skipping breakfast and skipping dinner. While both involve skipping meals for a certain period, the timing of the fast can influence the body in different ways. Some claim that skipping breakfast helps with a more efficient start to the day, while others swear by skipping dinner to avoid nighttime cravings and support better sleep. However, the effects of these fasting methods vary, depending on individual goals and lifestyle. To understand which option might be more beneficial, indianexpress.com consulted an expert.

How does skipping breakfast differ from skipping dinner in terms of metabolism and energy levels throughout the day?

Kanikka Malhotra, consultant dietician and certified diabetes educator, shares, "From a physiological standpoint, skipping breakfast and dinner have distinct metabolic impacts. Skipping breakfast disrupts the body's morning metabolic reset, leading to decreased insulin sensitivity, reduced energy expenditure, and potential metabolic slowdown. This can trigger compensatory overeating later and impair cognitive function." Conversely, Malhotra adds that skipping dinner may trigger longer overnight fasting periods, potentially enhancing metabolic autophagy and insulin sensitivity. However, it can also cause evening energy crashes, disrupt sleep hormones, and potentially lead to muscle catabolism.

"Breakfast skipping tends to have more pronounced negative metabolic consequences compared to dinner skipping, primarily due to its impact on daily metabolic programming and energy regulation," she mentions. The dietician mentions that people with high morning cortisol levels or

stress-related conditions could experience better hormonal balance by skipping evening meals. Skipping breakfast can trigger significant psychological distress related to appetite and cravings. (Source: Freepik)

How does the timing of the fast affect the body's ability to burn fat or regulate blood sugar levels?

The timing of fasting can significantly influence fat oxidation and glycemic control. "Morning fasting typically occurs when glycogen stores are depleted, potentially enhancing fat burning and insulin sensitivity. The body's morning hormonal environment, characterised by elevated cortisol and growth hormone, can optimise lipolysis," notes Malhotra. Evening fasting, conversely, occurs after daily energy expenditure, potentially reducing metabolic efficiency. Late-day fasting may disrupt circadian rhythms and decrease insulin sensitivity. "Research suggests morning fasting might be more effective for metabolic health, as it aligns with the body's natural metabolic peak and can improve glucose regulation and fat metabolism more effectively than evening fasting periods," she says.

Psychological impacts of skipping breakfast versus skipping dinner

Skipping breakfast can trigger significant psychological distress related to appetite and cravings. Without morning nutrition, individuals often experience heightened hunger hormones like ghrelin, leading to increased impulsive eating and potential overeating later in the day. This disruption can cause mood fluctuations, reduced cognitive focus, and increased stress, highlights Malhotra. She continues, "Conversely, skipping dinner may generate different psychological responses, potentially causing evening anxiety, sleep disruption, and persistent thoughts about food."



## Chris Evans set to return to Marvel Cinematic Universe with Avengers: Doomsday



ney in the iconic mantle. It's speculated that Evans may not reprise his portrayal of Captain America directly, but there is still a possibility of him returning as Steve Rogers, the character he so famously embodied for nearly a decade in the MCU. Evans' last appearance as Steve Rogers was in Avengers: Endgame (2019), which concluded his character's storyline with a heartfelt and heroic sendoff. However, recent developments have fans speculating about his return in some form. Evans also made a cameo appearance earlier this year in Deadpool & Wolverine, playing his earlier Marvel role as Johnny Storm from the Fantastic Four films of the 2000s.

As previously reported, Avengers: Doomsday will feature multiple fan-favourite characters from the MCU, many of whom are original Avengers. Additionally, Robert Downey Jr will return to the franchise, albeit in a completely different role, playing the iconic Marvel villain, Dr Doom.

The Russo Brothers, known for their work on Avengers: Infinity War, Captain America: The Winter Soldier, and Captain America: Civil War, will be bringing their signature storytelling style to Avengers: Doomsday. The film is expected to feature an ensemble cast, including the new Fantastic Four cast members — Pedro Pascal, Joseph Quinn, Vanessa Kirby, and Ebon Moss-Bachrach — who will join the Avengers in this multi-universe adventure. Avengers: Doomsday is slated for release on May 1, 2026, followed by Avengers: Secret Wars in May 2027, promising an exciting future for the MCU as it continues to explore new dimensions and crossovers between characters and universes.

## Patralekhaa admits that her career struggles 'pained' husband Rajkumar Rao: 'Acting is a lonely process'

Bollywood couple Rajkumar Rao and Patralekhaa starred together in the critically acclaimed 2014 film CityLights. While Rajkumar had made his debut in films by this time and had starred in projects like Love Sex Aur Dhokha, Shahid, Kai Po Che, the Hansal Mehta's directorial marked Patralekhaa's acting debut. Though after CityLights, Rajkumar's career kept escalating, Patralekhaa struggled to get projects.

In a recent interaction, Patralekhaa shared how Rajkumar found it difficult to see her struggle to bag projects. Speaking to ETimes, Patralekhaa opened up on finally getting credit for her work in IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack. She said, "When you are not doing well, you hustle but when your partner or sibling isn't doing well, that makes it more difficult. You feel you can't do anything about it. That was Raj's journey with me." Patralekhaa admitted that while she was struggling, Rajkumar was seeing constant success. However, he never spoke about his projects to her so that it won't pain her. "He would never talk about it, but I knew that my journey pained him a bit," she added.

Rajkumar added his perspective during the conversation, expressing his support for his wife while acknowledging the isolating nature of acting. "I don't know why she



didn't get enough deserving work after Citylights. I'm there for her, but acting is a personal lonely process," he said. After CityLights, Patralekhaa appeared in a few films, but they failed to achieve box office success. However, she recently garnered critical acclaim for her role in the web series IC 814: The Kandahar Hijack, which is based on the 1999 hijacking of Indian Airlines Flight 814.

## Bobby Deol tears up recalling how career struggles put his family 'through hardship': 'I know they were going through pain'

Bobby Deol has experienced a rollercoaster journey in the Hindi film industry. After becoming one of the most sought-after actors in the 1990s, his career witnessed a significant slump during the 2000s. However, his powerful comeback with the Netflix film Class of 83 (2020) and the web series Aashram (2020) earned him critical acclaim, reestablishing him as a serious performer. More recently, he won hearts with his portrayal of the menacing antagonist Abrar in Ranbir Kapoor's Animal, marking his return to mass popularity.

At the recently held SCREEN Live in Mumbai, Bobby got emotional while recounting how his career struggles impacted him and his family. With tears streaming down his face, the Gupt actor revealed how difficult it was for his loved ones to see him go through tough times during his career slump. Bobby said, "I did put them through hardship, my family. We are so close knit, we live together and I know that they were going through pain by seeing me go through pain and there is nothing they could have done." As his elder brother and actor Sunny Deol tried to console a tearful Bobby, he added, "That's the whole thing. Don't give up in life."

Bobby Deol made his acting debut in Rajkumar Santoshi's Barsaat in 1995 and quickly rose to fame with hits like Gupt (1997), Soldier (1998), Badal (2000), Bichhoo (2000), Ajnabee (2001), and Humraaz (2002). However, the 2000s brought a series of box office failures, and despite an attempted comeback with Race 3 (2018)—which was panned by critics but fared well commercially—his career stagnated until his success with Class of '83 and



Aashram. Animal, directed by Sandeep Reddy Vanga, became a turning point for Bobby, with audiences and critics alike praising his chilling portrayal of Abrar, a mute antagonist. The film achieved massive box office success, with Bobby's performance being hailed as one of his finest. Looking ahead, Bobby Deol has an exciting lineup of projects. He will appear in two Telugu films, Daaku Maharaja and Hari Hara Veera Mallu: Part 1. Additionally, he will star in the much-awaited multi-starrer Housefull 5, Alpha, and the Tamil film Thalapathy 69.

## Shah Rukh Khan, Hrithik Roshan give a shoutout to Ashutosh Gowariker for 20 years of his production house: 'Your vision and talent has given us many films to cherish'

Ashutosh Gowariker Productions Private Limited (AGPPL), the production house founded by filmmaker Ashutosh Gowariker and his wife Sunita Gowariker, has completed 20 glorious years in Indian cinema. To mark this milestone, several notable names from the Indian film industry have come together to congratulate Gowariker on his remarkable journey. Gowariker's production house has given Indian cinema some of its most iconic films, including the timeless classic Swades, the critically acclaimed magnum opus Jodhaa Akbar, and the historical drama Panipat — The Great Betrayal. Shah Rukh Khan, who worked with Ashutosh Gowariker on Swades, congratulated the filmmaker on AGPPL completing 20 years in the industry. "Congratulations @AshGowariker!! Your vision and talent has given us many films to cherish. Twenty years is a big milestone and here's to many many more years of fantastic

films!! Swades will always be one of my most special films..." SRK wrote on social media. Responding to Shah Rukh, the filmmaker wrote, "Thank you so much, Shah... for being a friend AND well-wisher for the longest time! #Swades is truly that bond between us, that will always remain so SPECIAL!!!" Hrithik Roshan, who headlined Ashutosh Gowariker's Jodhaa Akbar alongside Aishwarya Rai, also congratulated the filmmaker on his achievement. "Congratulations on 20 years of excellence in storytelling, direction and producing memorable cinema, @ashutoshgowariker @sunita.gowariker & @agppl team! To many more," Roshan wrote. Abhishek Bachchan, who appeared in Gowariker's 2010 historical action-adventure film Khelein Hum Jee Jaan Sey, also congratulated the filmmaker on his production house completing 20 years in the industry.

## Ranbir, Kareena, Alia and Saif travel to Delhi to invite PM Modi for Raj Kapoor Film Festival.



Raj Kapoor 100th birth anniversary celebrations: Besides Ranbir-Alia and Kareena-Saif, Neetu Kapoor and Karisma Kapoor were also spotted at the Mumbai airport, all dressed in traditional attire as they made their way to meet the PM. Alia Bhatt, Ranbir Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor Khan and Saif Ali Khan at Mumbai's Kalina airport as they jet off to New Delhi for a special meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Kapoor family, just like his fans, will celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of legendary actor-filmmaker Raj Kapoor on Saturday (December 14). To commemorate the occasion, the family will host a film festival celebrating his lasting impact on cinema. Ahead of the event, several members of the Kapoor family travelled to New Delhi on Tuesday to extend an invitation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the upcoming event.

Among those who flew to the capital city for the special meeting were Raj Kapoor's grandchildren Ranbir Kapoor and Kareena Kapoor Khan and their respective spouses Alia Bhatt and Saif Ali Khan. Ranbir's mother Neetu Kapoor and Kareena's sister Karisma Kapoor were also seen with them at Mumbai airport today morning, all dressed in traditional attire as they made their way to meet the PM. Alia Bhatt wore a red saree, while Ranbir Kapoor donned a black

bandhgala. Saif Ali Khan, meanwhile, sported a jacket with a kurta pajama, while Kareena Kapoor, Karisma Kapoor and Neetu Kapoor wore salwar kameez. The actors were spotted at Mumbai's Kalina airport. It was earlier reported that the Kapoor kids were planning a big celebration in memory of their loving grandfather.

As reported by PTI earlier, on the occasion of Raj Kapoor's 100th birth anniversary, PVR INOX Limited and the Film Heritage Foundation will organise an RK Film Festival. The festival will be held from December 13 to 15 in 101 theaters across 34 cities in India. This event is expected to be one of the most extensive retrospectives ever dedicated to Raj Kapoor's cinema. As part of the centenary celebrations, audiences will have the unique opportunity to relive Raj Kapoor's timeless masterpieces on the big screen.

His classics like Awaraz (1951), Shree 420 (1955), Sangam (1964), Mera Naam Joker (1970), and others will be featured on the big screen. Raj Kapoor, who was considered a pioneer of Indian cinema, died in 1988. His sons Rishi Kapoor and Randhir Kapoor carried his legacy of acting forward in Hindi cinema. And now that baton lies with Ranbir Kapoor, Kareena Kapoor, Neetu Kapoor, and others who are amongst the most popular stars in Bollywood.

## Siddharth dismisses Pushpa 2's Patna event turnout as just marketing: 'Crowds don't reflect quality'

Siddharth's comments on Pushpa 2's pre-release event in Patna sparks controversy. Siddharth's comments on Pushpa 2's pre-release event in Patna sparks controversy. Team Pushpa 2: The Rule went on a promotional blitzkrieg to ensure the film had a massive opening when it was released on December 5. There can be no doubt that they were successful in their strategy as the Allu Arjun-Sukumar film broke many box-office records and it is just inches away from the coveted Rs 1000 crore club. The promotional tour began with an event in Patna, Bihar where scores of fans had turned up to see their favourite star and cheer for the homecoming of a character they had adopted as their own. This event became a talking point, and was pegged as a watershed event in promotional campaigns for big-ticket films that aimed to have a pan-Indian reach. However, actor Siddharth, who was recently seen in Indian 2, isn't buying it.

In a recent podcast with YouTuber Madan Gowri, Siddharth, who was promoting his upcoming film Miss You, spoke strongly against manufactured hype for movies. "It is all marketing," said the actor when he was asked about the reach of Pushpa 2 in the Hindi markets. "Honestly, in our country, it is not tough to pool in crowds. For instance, if you are going to have four JCBs in an area to do some construction, you will have people gathering just to witness it. They (team Pushpa 2) booked a ground, and organised an event. People came to watch. That's all. In India, crowds doesn't reflect quality," said Siddharth, who went on to say that every political party in India can usher in huge crowds for the meeting, but it doesn't mean they win every election. Suggesting that most of the participants of such political rallies are paid to be there, Siddharth said, "Back in my time,



we used to call these crowds Biryani and quarter bottle (alcohol)." As expected, these comments haven't gone down well among netizens who started admonishing the actor for his opinion that seemingly belittled the reach of the film. Pushpa 2, which has amassed over Rs 900 crore at the worldwide box office, has already become the fastest Indian film to breach the Rs 500 crore, Rs 600 crore, Rs 700 crore, Rs 800 crore, and Rs 900 crore mark. Starring Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna, and Fahadh Faasil, Pushpa 2: The Rule did receive mixed responses from critics, but it seems to be one of those review-proof films that draws in crowds irrespective of its critical response.

## Upset over Rajasthan CM leaving mid-performance, Sonu Nigam urges politicians to stay for entire show or not come at all: 'This is an insult to Goddess Saraswati'

After a performance in Rajasthan recently, Sonu Nigam took to social media to urge politicians to avoid leaving events midway in the future. Sonu Nigam performed at the Rising Rajasthan event in Jaipur on Monday, which was attended by Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma as well.

Renowned playback singer-music director Sonu Nigam recently took Rajasthan by storm by delivering a stirring performance. However, the experience was not entirely pleasant for him as he observed several dignitaries, especially politicians, leaving the event midway. After the event, Nigam took to social media to urge leaders to avoid such behaviour in the future. Following his performance at the Rising Rajasthan event in Jaipur on Monday, Nigam posted a selfie video on Instagram, addressing politicians directly. He urged them not to attend performances unless they could stay for the entire event. Mentioning that even Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma, among other ministers, left mid-performance, Nigam questioned the kind of precedent such actions set for the public. Pushpa 2 worldwide collection day 5 | Allu Arjun, Rashmika Mandanna film mints Rs 900 crore worldwide

"A lot of good people had come for the show; it was a very prestigious event. Delegates came from all over the world to enhance the pride of Rajasthan. The Chief Minister of the state was there, so was the Minister of Youth Affairs

and Sports (Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore). I could not see all of them in the dark; but there were a lot of people," Sonu Nigam recalled. Nigam added, "In the middle of the show, I saw that CM saab and the rest of the people got up and left. As soon as they left, all the delegates also left. I have a request to all politicians, if you do not respect your artistes, then what will the people outside do? In America or elsewhere, I've never seen a President leave midway during a performance. At least they would inform before leaving. My humble request to you all is that, if you have to leave like this, then do not come; or at least leave before the show starts." Sonu Nigam expressed his disappointment, calling such actions deeply disrespectful. "Leaving in the middle of an artiste's performance is very disrespectful. This is an insult to Goddess Saraswati. In fact, I did not notice you guys leaving. But after you did, I received a lot of messages from people asking me to not do shows like this anymore for politicians where they get up and leave midway. So, I have a request to you, if you have to leave, then do so before the show starts. Do not sit. I know that you are great people and busy as well. You have a lot of work; you handle all the responsibilities; and hence, you should not waste your time for a show. You should leave early. It's a humble request," he signed off. Nigam's sister, playback singer Teesha Nigam, also supported his statement, commenting,



## Big equestrian question lands in court: Are horses athletes or equipment?



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

for athletes. I've never seen horses being felicitated after medals," he says. He harks back when a winning horse was draped in a celebratory jhool (horse rug) in Rajasthan.

Dundlod adds that equestrian allows a horse to be replaced once in competition, if it goes lame. "If a human athlete falls ill, they can't be replaced like equipment is," he stresses. "They can say whatever, it is very much an athlete," says EFI general secretary Col Jaiveer Singh, who insists that Para 16 of the National Sports Code clearly spells out the merits of exemptions granted for being a "peculiar sport". "It is a peculiar sport because horses are live beings who need to be fed, given water, massaged, picked after, cleaned, taken for a walk. It's not an F-1 car that sits waiting in a garage." He is dismayed at the suggestion that horses haven't gotten their due. "There's a victory lap, but horses need rest! They are taken good care of and pampered. An Arjuna would be taking it too far. But a lot of dog units and mules in service are honoured. Horses are too," he says. Advocate Jayant Mehta for the EFI, while stressing that the matter is subjudice, says, "A horse needs a stable, exercising grounds, prompt availability of medical attention at the base. And all this is bare minimum. States can't say we will make these facilities partly available. You can't have a vet in Delhi and a horse in Meerut," he says.

He might have heard more absurd arguments, but his earnest submission was that a horse can't be called equipment. "A horse needs a passport, undergoes medical checks and gets quarantined. It gets marked in competitions. Nobody gives points to a javelin or a rifle. And a pistol doesn't moodily refuse to fire, nor does a javelin stomp off and refuse to fly," he says. If considered an athlete, the classification contravenes the sports code, Dundlod says, since India's winning horses were foreign-born (foreign human athletes are disallowed). The EFI clarifies that while horses have passports, they don't have a nationality. They are registered as Indian heading out to international competition. Also a winning horse can command a large price (like IPL cricketers). A gun or javelin doesn't start costing millions just because it was used by a gold medalist, though the memorabilia can have great future value. A senior former equestrian, not wishing to take sides in this horse-drama, says, "In the early 1900s, Olympic medals were given only to horses for their athletic exploits. Gradually, medals were shared and later only went to the rider. But there's precedence of horses being the main athletes. It's true though they don't live in Athletes village at the Olympics," he says. "It's just a play of words. He can be both. No big deal." All he knows is nothing has been heard from the horse's mouth.

IT IS "neigh" impossible to know what horses themselves think on the matter but the Delhi High Court was recently tasked with ascertaining if horses ought to be categorised as "athletes" or "equipment", in the sport of equestrian. The petitioner, Rajasthan Equestrian Association, wants voting rights for states, like every sport. They are locked in a long battle with the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI), which insists that the sport is "peculiar" and cannot have a pyramidal governance framework of district and state bodies, given the infrastructure is niche, and requirements specific to horses. The EFI says they are living beings, moody too, hence qualify as athletes. And the upkeep of stable and training infrastructure by the current electorate of rider clubs requires crores in investment, so anyone spending that amount deserves a vote. Neither side mercifully has demanded voting rights for equines. But the Rajasthan association contends "horses are just horses", whose hiring / transportation reimbursements get lumped with boats / yachts in the National Sports Code, and hence must be treated as equipment. The court has been seized of the bigger battle and the matter remains subjudice while submissions have been made. The fraternity is zapped, terming it all "absurd, nonsensical, illogical and bizarre".

Of course, the horse is a living athlete. But is it really?

Raghuvendra Singh Dundlod, the Rajasthan petitioner, contends that taxes are excused when horses are brought into the country, just like for cycles, yachts, rifles — all sports equipment. "No other country considers it an athlete. They are definitely equipment, but because it's a live being, you must feed it," he says. A keen rider himself and promoter of indigenous horses, Dundlod, whose father was a cavalryman, demands to know why no winning horse has ever been felicitated, if it indeed is an athlete. "There's no medal or Arjuna award for a horse and no one saying, 'let's bring a horse a rosette, and say you have done well', like

## 'Gukesh vs Ding doesn't look like a game between two World Championship contenders'

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Five-time World Chess champion Magnus Carlsen has lashed out at the quality on display at the World Chess Championship between China's Ding Liren and India's D Gukesh, saying it doesn't look like a game between two World Championship contenders. Gukesh, who was ahead at the start of Game 12, played an opening that gave Ding the advantage. Ding's win over Gukesh on Monday levelled the score at 6-6 with two games left to play, and tiebreaks if needed. "This does not look like a game between two World Championship contenders. It just looks like maybe the second round or third round of an open tournament. It's like it's the stage where you play somebody who is like decent with openings but then you just win with class," Carlsen said during a podcast by the Take Take Take app. The Norwegian said Gukesh has made it quite easy for Ding.

"Ding has not had to calculate a single line in this whole game. He's been able to play the whole game just based on positional understanding which he's very good at," he said. Carlsen said that Gukesh should've used his point advantage and put pressure on Ding, but that didn't happen. "You have to make it difficult for your opponent. That's when mistakes happen. If you play like the way that



he (Gukesh) played today, it is very easy for the opponent to play near perfectly and win," he said. Going into the final two games, American Grandmaster Hikaru Nakamura and Carlsen said that Ding has emerged as the favourite. "After a couple of insane games, Ding is the favourite though psychologically it's going to be hard for both players," said Carlsen. Nakamura agreed with Carlsen, adding, "I think there's little pressure on Ding because we've talked about how his chances increase with the less time format. So there's no doubt that he has the advantage."

## When Sunil Gavaskar showed Travis Head his century celebration with floppy hat on his bat handle



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Travis Head after scoring a blistering ton against India in Adelaide did a cradling-the-baby celebration with his bat as a tribute to his second born and later continued his celebration by putting his helmet on the bat. The following day in a heartwarming moment former Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar went to Head and congratulated him. He also pulled out his phone to show him a photograph from his playing days, from a 1980s game against the Australians in India after he had hit a hundred. Allan Border can be seen in the background, and in the front was Gavaskar holding his bat up to acknowledge the crowd's applause after a hundred. On top of that bat was his sunny floppy hat. In Adelaide, Head would almost repeat the visual, just that he had the helmet instead of the hat. Both cricketers, an Indian legend and an Australian larrikin, would laugh and high-five. Gavaskar remained unbeaten on 166 in that knock.

The game ended up in a draw however, in the current clash Head's ton was the game-changing inning and played as a catalyst for Australia's win. He walked to the crease with the game delicately poised at 103/3. However, he took the game by the scruff of its neck and scored a 141-ball 140 to help Australia level the series 1-1. Head retreats to almost one spot, around the leg and middle, on the back foot primarily, crunching himself into that area as if he were traveling in a packed unreserved compartment of an Indian train and there is no space elsewhere. But he unleashes such mayhem from there, slashing,

carving, stabbing, punching. He might not be a classical batsman, but he is a batsman with a very specific and conscious method. By stationing himself there, he casts this illusionary spell on the bowlers, dragging them into his space. A ball on off stump that can cramp up most batsmen appears as width to him. Even Jasprit Bumrah was snared by it, occasionally thinking he could hit that off stump, but would wince as Head, without foot movement of the conventional kind but maintaining balance and springing up with his knee flex, would slash him through backward point. The hands just fly. The incident was reported by journalist Sriram Veera from Adelaide

## ICC may punish Mohammed Siraj, Travis Head for Adelaide showdown

Adelaide: Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj and Australian batter Travis Head are set to be "punished" by the ICC for their verbal altercation during the day-night Test here after both were reportedly found guilty of breaching the world body's code of conduct.

Multiple reports, including by 'Daily Telegraph' and 'Code Sports', stated here that Siraj and Head were held guilty following a disciplinary hearing on Monday. However, both are likely to be only fined or reprimanded instead of facing a suspension due to their good past record.

Head and Siraj had a brief showdown on day two of the match that Australia won by 10 wickets on Sunday. Head had struck a splendid 141-ball knock of 140 before being castled by Siraj, who went on to give him an aggressive send-off following an exchange of words. The Indian endured boos from the Adelaide crowd following the confrontation.

## Harbhajan Singh on Mohammed Siraj and Travis Head fine: 'I think ICC is a bit too strict on players'



GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Harbhajan Singh's Mohammed Siraj, left, interacts with Australia's Travis Head during the day three of the second cricket test match between Australia and India at the Adelaide Oval in Adelaide, Australia. India were thumped by 10 wickets in the Adelaide Test. However, the much-talking point of the game came when Mohammed Siraj rattled Travis Head's stumps after the latter scored 140 and gave him a send-off. The duo was seen exchanging words among themselves and ICC would later slap both of them with a 20 per cent match fee.

"Well, I think ICC is a bit too strict on players. These

## Susan Polgar says Ding Liren's win over Gukesh at World Chess Championship was his best in 2 years; 'Where has this Ding been?'

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

After Ding Liren's impressive win over Gukesh in the World Chess Championship Game 12, grandmaster Susan Polgar in a series of tweets showered praise on the 32-year-old defending champion from China. "Someone please report brutality on the board! Where has this Ding been in the last 2 years?" wrote Susan in one of her tweets. Susan also lauded Liren, who was immaculate in the 12th game to level the score 6-6. This is Ding's best game in the past 2 years. This is his real strength when he is in good form. What a statement to make after a horrible blunder yesterday," said Susan. Susan believes this will be a big test for the 18-year-old Gukesh to bounce back after this heart-breaking loss against Ding in the World Chess Championship Game 12. "This will be Gukesh's biggest test in his young career! How to come back from such a loss? Luckily, he has a day off to recuperate. For those who said that Gukesh would destroy, demolish, humiliate, and massacre Ding, they were all wrong! As I said all along, this will be a close match, and it will be. Do not count either player out yet! Sit back and enjoy!" Game over! 6-6 with 2 to go! This is Ding's best game in the past 2 years. This is his real strength when he is in good form. What a statement to make after a horrible blunder yesterday! Susan also explains dos and the



don'ts for both the grandmasters in the last two rounds Susan on Gukesh "Keep the pressure and steer the games towards sharper and more dynamic positions like in game 11." Susan on Ding "Keep the pressure but keep the game towards a more positional and static positions like in game 12." The score is 6-6 with 2 games left! How should they approach the last 2? — Gukesh: Keep the pressure and steer the games towards sharper and more dynamic positions like in game 11. "Get into time pressure. This would be bad for both sides as blunders can happen with little time on the clock and no increments (until move 41).

## Mohammed Siraj vs Travis Head: Ravi Shastri wants India to fight fire with fire at Gabba

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Mohammed Siraj India's Mohammed Siraj signs autographs for fans after the second cricket test match between Australia and India at the Adelaide Oval in Adelaide, Australia. (AP) Former India coach Ravi Shastri wants Rohit Sharma-led India to fight fire with fire following the fiery interaction between Mohammed Siraj and Travis Head during the recently-concluded pink-ball Test in Adelaide. "I'm sure Siraj and Head are mature individuals who will deal with it and the dust would have settled already," Shastri wrote in a column for CODE Sports. "If anything, I wouldn't have expected anything else from a fast bowler after he'd been hit for a six. Siraj was letting off some steam. That's the fast bowler's temperament. You want it to be like that. When I was playing, my philosophy was to give it back as good as you get. And it's exactly what I would tell my players when I was coaching India in Australia. Do not hold back one bit. Do not take even one backward step. It then became the team's philosophy and everyone from Virat Kohli to Rishabh Pant and every member of the squad was prepared to give it



back to the Aussies." Shastri also wants India to change their approach in the third Test at Gabba, starting from December 14. "What I'd like to see in Brisbane is for the captain to return to the top of the order. Opening the batting is where Rohit belongs," Shastri said. "They might have tried having him in the middle in Adelaide but they have to immediately go back on that plan and instead push KL Rahul down the order. You need Rohit setting the tempo at the top. That's his best position."

## Coach Tan, who first teamed up Satwik- Chirag, begins second stint with doubles pair

GNS News Agency, Dec 12

Malaysian coach Tan Kim Her, who first brought together India's celebrated pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, returns to India taking charge of the doubles teams. Coach Tan reached Hyderabad Sunday night, Satwik confirmed on the sidelines of Go Sports Awards in Mumbai. Tan replaces Danish Mathias Boe who took the Indians to the pinnacle of world rankings and helped them win the Asian Games gold at Thomas Cup besides Indonesian Open, but twice faced disappointment at Olympics, 2024 being severely soul-crushing. While Boe fired up their rise to Top 5 and helped pick a World's bronze, the current No 9 pair will aim for All England and the World Championship in coming years, guided by the Malaysian.

It is a highly anticipated reunion, given it was the Malaysian's brainwave to link up the two tall shuttlers, who ahead of the Rio Olympics in 2016 played with different partners — Satwik with Krishna Prasad Garaga and Chirag with MR Arjun. But Tan saw immediate potential in the two even while they were playing against each other in a 2014 junior international final. Tan had however taken up a better rewarding offer with Japan, post 2017, even as Satwik-Chirag were still picking international series titles — starting Mauritius in 2016 within months of pairing up. Their first tour title would come in 2018 at Hyderabad.

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty Asian Games Gold Medallist Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty won against Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia in the semifinals at Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2024 at IG Stadium, New Delhi on Saturday. (Express photo by Praveen Khanna) Satwik reckoned they would pick off from